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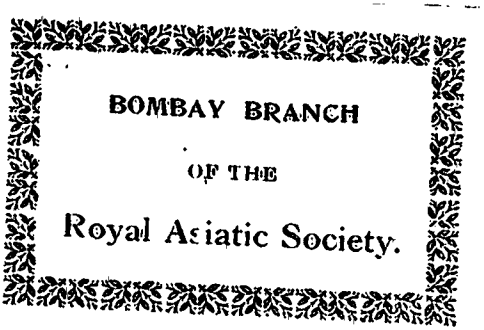


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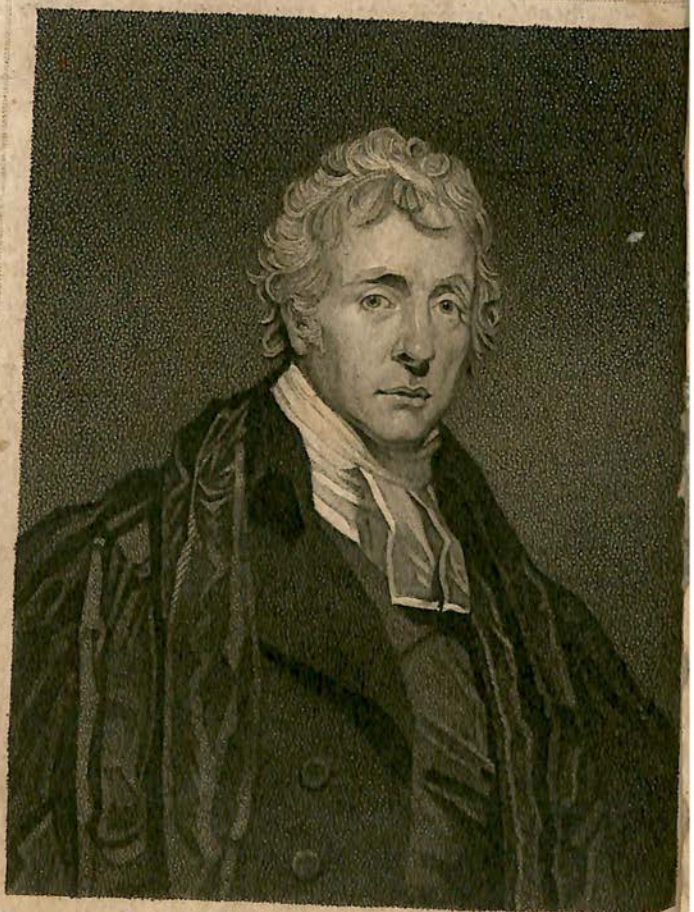

M.A. Shee Esqr. pinxt.

The Revd. Walter Blake Kirwan
Dean of Killala

# SERMONS

BY THE LATE

Rev. WALTER BLAKE KIRWAN,

*DEAN OF KILLALA.*

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WITH

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE.

LONDON:

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TO

MRS. PETER LATOUCHE.

MADAM,

IT is impossible to find, in the community of those by whom the late Dean of Killala was esteemed, any one, to whom, had he lived to publish his Sermons, he would have dedicated them in preference to you, whom he had so long looked up to as the affectionate and unaffected Patroness of the Widow and the Orphan, for whom he had, for eighteen years, been the assiduous and successful advocate.

Your kind, earnest, unabated and effectual patronage of the widow and children of the Dean, from the moment of his death, would give you an original title to have these Sermons dedicated to you.

To you, therefore, with love, reverence, and gratitude, these Sermons are dedicated, by,

Madam,

Your affectionate,
Obedient and faithful Friend,

WILHELMINA KIRWAN.

MOUNT-PLEASANT,
*Jan.* 1813.

# A SKETCH

OF THE

# LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

# THE REV. DEAN KIRWAN.

THIS celebrated preacher was descended from an ancient and respectable Roman Catholic family, and born in Galway about the year 1754.

He was sent in early youth to the college of English Jesuits at St. Omers, in whose classic shades, as he often declared, he imbibed the noble ambition of benefiting mankind.

At the age of seventeen he embarked for the Danish island of St. Croix, in the West Indies, under the protection of his father's cousin-german, who had large possessions there; but after enduring for six years a climate pernicious to his delicate constitution, and spectacles of oppression and cruelty shocking to his feelings, he returned to Europe in disgust.

By the advice of his maternal uncle, then titular primate of Ireland, he repaired to the University of Louvain, where he received priest's orders, and was soon after honoured with the chair of natural and moral philosophy: but in 1778 he was called from the sequestered pursuits of science to the cure of souls, as chaplain to the Neapolitan ambassador at the British court.

Before a small but respectable congregation he soon attained celebrity; and some of the discourses which he pronounced in His Excellency's chapel were printed, and should have formed part of this collection, if any copies of them could have been recovered. But he was then only qualifying himself for greater exertions, and with that view assiduously attended thofe splendid exhibitions of public speaking which were at that time displayed in the senate and at the bar, where the conspicuous merit of his countrymen could not fail to enflame his ardent temper with enthusiastic emulation.

Amidst this meridian blaze of eloquence, the church alone continued cold, and (however *enlightened* by an improved philosophy) had seldom been *warmed* but by the fiery breath of polemical divinity.

To rouse devotion from this profound lethargy, was a daring novelty which demanded the powers of

a Kirwan. Fortunately for the interests of humanity, he felt his force, and seized the glorious opportunity. After two years retirement in the bosom of his family, probably absorbed in the consideration of this important step, he at length, in the year 1787, resolved to conform to the established religion; a determination which was greatly promoted by the conviction (as he himself declared), that he should thus obtain more extensive opportunities of doing good. He was, in consequence, introduced by the Rev. Dr. Hastings, Archdeacon of Dublin, to his first Protestant congregation in St. Peter's church, where he preached on the 24th of June in that year.

The first sermon of so distinguished a convert naturally attracted an overflowing congregation, who expected, that, according to immemorial usage, he would reprobate the doctrine and practices of the church from which he had withdrawn; but, instead of "pulling down the altar at which he "had sacrificed," he exhibited an example of Christian meekness, liberality, and conciliation, in the choice of a subject utterly unconnected with controversy. Nor did he, upon any subsequent occasion, profane the pulpit by religious or political intolerance, or even, in his most confidential communications, breathe a syllable of contempt or reproach against any religious persuasion whatever.

They, who are conscious of interested infirmity,

naturally suspect the motives of a line of conduct apparently calculated to invite promotion: but his unblemished and amiable life, fervently devoted to the public good, may vindicate his preference of a sphere in which he could pursue that great object with the best effect: and if he sometimes adverted to political events, it was not surprising that a zealous divine should be shocked at the sudden crush of all religious establishments in France, of which (during the captivity of the ill-fated Louis) he was partly an eye-witness. As the habitual advocate of humanity, he felt peculiar horror at the atrocities of an ungovernable multitude; but they who were most gratified by his vehement invectives against such outrages, were often no less surprised and humiliated by the manly boldness with which he intermingled severe, though general, reprehension of their own vices.

For some time after his conformity, he preached every Sunday in St. Peter's church, and the collections for the poor, on every occasion, rose four or five-fold above their usual amount. Before the expiration of his first year, he was wholly reserved for the distinguished and difficult task of preaching charity sermons; and on the 5th of November 1788, the governors of the general daily schools of several parishes entered into a resolution,—"That from the effects which the discourses of the Rev. Walter Blake Kirwan, from the pulpit, have had, his officiating in the metropolis was con-

sidered a peculiar national advantage; and that vestries should be called to consider the most effectual method to secure to the city an instrument, under Providence, of so much public benefit."

In the same year he was preferred, by the Archbishop of Dublin, to the prebend of Howth, and in the next, to the parish of St. Nicholas-Without, the joint income of which amounted to about 400l. a year.

These were his only church-preferments, until the year 1800, when the late Marquis Cornwallis, then Lord-Lieutenant, preferred him to the deanery of Killala, worth about 400l. a year, at which time he resigned the prebend of Howth.

His ardour was not abated by promotion, nor his meekness corrupted by admiration; though whenever he preached, such multitudes assembled that it was necessary to defend the entrance of the church by guards and palisadoes. He was presented with addresses and pieces of plate from every parish, and the freedom of various corporations; his portrait was painted and engraved by the most eminent artists; and (what was infinitely more grateful to his feelings) the collections at his sermons far exceeded any that ever were known in a country distinguished for unmeasured benevolence. Even in times of public calamity and distress, his

irresistible powers of persuasion repeatedly produced contributions exceeding a thousand or twelve hundred pounds at a sermon; and his hearers, not content with emptying their purses into the plate, sometimes threw in jewels or watches, as earnest of further benefactions.

The native warmth of his character breathed through all his discourses, and animated his conversation. His action was various and emphatic, without seeming studied or outrageous; his voice full and melodious; and his utterance successively solemn, earnest, melting, and impassioned, without the least appearance of affected modulation. His glance was piercing, his countenance austere and commanding, and his whole delivery was in perfect unison with the evangelical style and spirit of his discourses, which bore a strong impression of vigorous original conception and glowing zeal, illuminated by sound judgment and a profound knowledge of human nature.

He seems cautiously to have abstained from polishing any part of his sermons too highly, to blend with such extemporaneous effusions as occasional circumstances suggested, many of which burst from him with a rapid and overwhelming impetuosity, that hurried away the passions of his auditory in resistless ecstasy.

They who expect high finishing and figurative pomp, and cannot be satisfied without poetry in prose, will find nothing in these remains to gratify their vitiated taste. But, though bereft of the magic of emphatic delivery, and the vigour and vivacity of many extempore additions, they still present to such as duly weigh the proper objects of a Christian orator, the revived spirit of the primitive fathers of the church, purified from their principal defects. No quibbling of words, or anatomizing of texts; no quaint glosses, or strained applications of Scripture; no pedantic dissertations upon Hebrew roots; no subtile skirmishing with shadows, or insulting triumphs over unrefuted infidelity: but a fervent and pressing appeal to the understanding and the heart; a copious, clear, and irresistible torrent of reasoning, flows from a thorough conviction, and sincere anxiety not to refute or revile, but to convince and reform.

From this masculine strain of impassioned exhortation, conveyed in diction not florid, but elevated; and with a voice and manner not theatrical, but impressive, resulted effects proportionably solid; and contributions (amounting almost to prodigality) produced foundations which promise to be permanent monuments of national beneficence.

With the new convert also commenced a new era in pulpit eloquence, which has ever since

been manifestly improved; while some, who were astonished that with equal exertion they could not rise to equal energy, were reduced to envy what they had vainly tried to imitate, and traduced him as a declaimer, because they could not penetrate his secret for giving to elaborate composition the air of immediate inspiration.'

It is to be lamented that several of the pathetic addresses which first exalted his fame are missing; probably because he trusted chiefly to his excellent memory, or the spontaneous effusions of a mind pregnant with thought and feeling. But in proportion as his subject became exhausted, curiosity was abated, and invidious criticism emboldened. It consequently became incumbent on him to commit to writing the greater part, if not the whole of his later sermons, (which, as they had cost him more labour, he was inclined to prefer;) yet it must be remembered that they suffer all the disadvantages of posthumous publication, and the want of many finishing touches which the parental solicitude of an author would undoubtedly have bestowed upon his admired productions.

To correct every minute inaccuracy would involve the necessity of adding, as well as transposing and suppressing, which (if not injurious to his reputation) would be a gross imposition on the public. To aim at extreme exactness, would, indeed, de-

stroy the whole texture and character of his style, and would be as absurd as employing a lapidary to polish the dome of a cathedral. Some inaccuracies must be pardoned to an active imagination. Some redundance of expression contributes to popular effect: the iron temper of the multitude cannot be modelled but by a glowing heat and reiterated strokes, and amplification is essential to energy and magnificence: "Non amputata oratio et abscissa, "sed lata et magnifica et excelsa, tonat, fulgurat, "omnia denique perturbat ac miscet."

The effects of this vein of composition cannot be more strikingly illustrated than by the beautiful panegyric pronounced by Mr. Grattan in the Irish Parliament, on 19th of June, 1792:—"And what has the Church to expect? What is the case of Dr. Kirwan? This man preferred our country and our religion, and brought to both genius superior to what he found in either. He called forth the latent virtues of the human heart, and taught men to discover in themselves a mine of charity, of which the proprietors had been unconscious. In feeding the lamp of charity, he has almost exhausted the lamp of life. He came to interrupt the repose of the pulpit, and shakes one world with the thunder of the other. The preacher's desk becomes the throne of light. Round him a train, not such as crouch and swagger at the levee of princes; not such as attend the procession of the viceroy, horse,

foot, and dragoons; but that wherewith a great genius peoples his own state, — charity in ecstasy, and vice in humiliation; — vanity, arrogance, and saucy empty pride, appalled by the rebuke of the preacher, and cheated, for a moment, of their native improbity and insolence. — What reward? St. Nicholas-Within, or St. Nicholas-Without! The curse of *Swift* is upon him: to have been born an Irishman and a man of genius, and to have used it for the good of his country."

On 22nd of September 1798, Mr. Kirwan married Wilhelmina Richards, youngest daughter of Goddard Richards, Esq., late of Grange, in the county of Wexford, with whom he lived in uninterrupted harmony and happiness: his domestic virtues exemplified his public precepts; and his whole conduct was the more conspicuous for integrity, kindness, and generosity, as those qualities have been supposed incompatible with a monastic education.

But the period rapidly approached when the afflicted were to deplore their ablest advocate; and his unsparing exertions, in behalf of helpless innocence and want, were to receive their ultimate reward. Exhausted by the fatigues of his mission, this excellent man died, with signal piety and resignation, at his house at Mount-Pleasant, near Dublin, on 27th of October, 1805. His funeral was attended to his own church of St. Nicholas-Without,

by the children of all the parish-schools in Dublin, and his pall was borne by six gentlemen of the first distinction.

His widow was left with two sons and two daughters, with so slender a provision that they must have pined in obscurity and indigence, had not His Majesty been graciously pleased to grant her a pension of 300l. a year for her life, with the reversion to her daughters. But for the sons of him who fell a victim to his zeal in the cause of universal benevolence, no provision whatever has hitherto been made.

May these sermons, which are printed for their benefit, enable their surviving parent to give them such an education as becomes the memory of their revered father; to whom the fatherless and the widow for so many years owed their comforts, and, almost, their existence!

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# SERMON I.

[For the Schools of St. Peter's Parish.]

1 Cor. c. x. v. 24.

"*Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.*"

THE possession of happiness is the principle and end of all our actions and passions, our pleasures and our pains. The common or universal center to which all animated nature is hurried by rapid and irresistible movement. Men are united in society only to procure it. The arts and sciences have been invented only to perfect it. All states and professions are so many channels in which it is sought. The great and mean, rich and poor, infancy and age, passions and talents, virtues and vices, pleasures and toils, are all engaged in the unremitting pursuit of it. In a word, from the people that inhabit the most civilised cities, to the savage that prowls in the bosom of the

wilderness; from the throne of the monarch to the hut of the most abject peasant, the world is in labour to bring forth true peace and tranquillity of soul.

My object on the present occasion is not to enquire into the secret of this sublime and inexhaustible science. I am inclined however to believe that if it has any existence upon this earth, it is probably in the soul of a true Christian. Nor is there any description of our brethren, however abject and forlorn, to whom this tender and consoling invitation of our blessed Lord is not oftentimes addressed with effect: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The wisdom of the Gospel, my friends, is chiefly addressed to the heart, and therefore is easily understood by all. It is in touching that it enlightens us, in touching that it persuades. Directed by the light of faith, the eye of the true Christian is intensely fixed on the great sphere of eternity. He hears the solemn voice of his religion, which tells him, that in man there are two distinct

beings, the one material and perishable, the other spiritual and immortal. He knows and contemplates the rapid advance of that futurity, which is not measured by the succession of days and nights, or the revolution of years and ages. Before these profound and magnificent impressions all worldly glory fades. No interests can possess or transport his heart, but those to which he is invited from above. No, not a desire in his breast, not a movement in his life; no evil in his apprehension, or happiness in his conception, that refers not to eternity; he is all immensity of views and projects: and hence that true nobility of spirit, that calm, majestic indifference which looks down on the visionary enterprizes of man, sees them, unstable and fleeting as the waves of a torrent, pressed and precipitated by those that pursue, and scarce tell you where they are, when you behold them no more: hence likewise that equality of soul, which is troubled at no reverse or vicissitude of life, which knows not those tormenting successions, those rapid alternations of pleasure and pain, so frequent in the breast of worldlings: to be elevated by the slightest suc-

cess, depressed by the slightest reverse, intoxicated at a puff of praise, inconsolable at the least appearance of contempt, re-animated at a gleam of respect, tortured by an air of coldness and indifference; unbounded in all wishes, and disgusted after all possession, is a spectacle of human misery that would enhance the peace of a true Christian, did all the influence of a divine religion not infuse into his heart as much pity for his mistaken brethren, as it does superior dignity and elevation into his sentiments.

But without pursuing this character any further, of which, I would please myself in thinking, there are some living illustrations before me; I beg leave to observe, in nearer conformity with my text; that as self love is the most active principle of the human soul, and to seek our own wealth or happiness is to obey an innate and irresistible impulse, neither reason or religion go to hinder or discourage a just and reasonable attention to our own temporal interests; nor should any of the gospel precepts be explained in a manner which is inconsistent with that eternal law, which the finger of God hath

traced on our hearts. No. Attention to our own concerns can become culpable only, when they so far enslave and engross us, as to leave us neither leisure or inclination to promote the happiness of our fellow creatures. Then does self-love degenerate into selfishness. This, indeed, is a dark and melancholy transformation of our natural character, and the last term of its abasement. When the light of benevolence is entirely put out, man is reduced to that state of existence, which is disavowed by nature, and abhorred of God! Let one suppose him, I say, but once radically divested of all generous feelings, and entirely involved in himself; it will be impossible to say, what deeds of shame and horror he will not readily commit: in the balance of his perverted judgment, honor, gratitude, friendship, religion, yea, even natural affection, will all be outweighed by interest. The maxim of the Roman satirist will be his rule of life, "money at any rate." If the plain and beaten paths of the world, diligence and frugality, will conduct him to that end, it is well: but if not, rather than fail of his object, I will be bold to say,

he will plunge, without scruple or remorse, into the most serpentine labyrinths of fraud and iniquity. Whilst his schemes are unaccomplished, fretfulness and discontent will lower on his brow; when favorable, and even most prosperous, his unslaked and unsatisfied soul still thirsts for more. As he is insensible to the calamities of his fellow creatures, so the greatest torment he can experience, is an application to his charity and compassion. Should he stumble, like the Levite, on some spectacle of woe, he will, like the Levite, hasten to the other side of the way, resist the finest movements of nature, and cling to the demon of inhumanity, as the guardian angel of his happiness. Suppose him, however, under the accidental necessity of listening to the petition of misery; he will endeavour to beat down the evidence of the case by the meanest shifts and evasions; or will cry aloud, as the brutal and insensible Nabal did to the hungry soldiers of David, "Why should I be such a fool, as to give my flesh which I have prepared for my shearers, to men that I know not from whence they be?" But, admitting that a remnant of

shame, for example, in the face of a congregation like this, may goad him for once to an act of beneficence, so mean and inconsiderable, so unworthy of the great concern would it probably be, that the idol of his soul would appear more distinctly in the very relief he administers, than in the barbarous insensibility which habitually withholds it. Merciful and eternal God! what a passion! And how much ought the power and fascination of that object to be dreaded which can turn the human heart into such a pathless and irreclaimable desert. Irreclaimable, I say; for men inflamed with any other passion, even voluptuousness, the most impure and inveterate, are sometimes enlightened and reformed by the ministry of religion, or the sober and deliberate judgment of manhood and experience. But who will say that such a wretch as I have described, in the extremity of selfishness, was ever corrected by any ordinary resource or expedient? Who will say that he is at any time vulnerable by reproach, or, I had almost added, even convertible by grace! No; through every stage and revolution of life he remains invariably the same: or if

any difference, it is only this, that as he advances into the shade of a long evening, he clings closer and closer to the object of his idolatry: and while every other passion lies dead and blasted in his heart, his desire for more pelf increases with renewed eagerness, and he holds by a sinking world with an agonising grasp, till he drops into the earth with the increased curses of wretchedness on his head, without the tribute of a tear from child or parent, or any inscription on his memory; but that he lived to counteract the distributive justice of Providence, and died without hope or title to a blessed immortality. "Seek not your own, but every man another's wealth."

That there are few examples of such a passion I will readily admit. So abominable an infatuation is too far out of the line of nature ever to become extensive in its influence. But if avarice be rare, Mammon has still numerous, very numerous adorers of another description: and allow me to ask, What great difference does it make to the prolific order of human misery, whether it be spurned by a heart of adamant, or

not relieved by those who live splendidly and luxuriously? Here, my friends, is, I fear, the true state of the case. Can it be denied that a passion for splendid luxury begets an attachment to money, as the means of gratifying that passion? Who will deny that it sometimes leads to the most shameful degradation of the human character? Is it not well known that a man shall be at once both supple and proud, haughty and creeping; shall exact all homage within his own house, and descend to every baseness abroad? An imperious master assuming supreme majesty among his inferiors and dependents, a timid and complying slave where his fortunes can be advanced; who will play every personage, take and lay down every form, adore with profoundest abasement the patron he would propitiate, prevent his desires, sacrifice to his caprices, constrain his own inclinations, applaud what he secretly despises, caress what he cordially detests, shut up in his heart all his pleasures and his pains! in a word, shall neither think or act, or speak or be silent, or love or hate, but as he is moved and impelled by a vile consideration of personal

interest? And what is his object? merely to procure the means of a little luxury, to eat and drink in splendour, to drown for a moment the consciousness of his servility and degradation. Oh, if man can so utterly renounce himself, why is it not for God! The greatness of the master would ennoble the service; but to offer up so noble a victim, as the dignity of the human character, to so contemptible a divinity as the world, to make such sacrifices for a fugitive and unsubstantial object, more capable, on experiment, of irritating his desires, than of satisfying them; to be obliged to despise himself, and not always even to be rewarded for the humiliation! "No," says the prophet Isaias, "there is no judgment in his ways." Fortune, if I may use the expression, places a bandage over his eyes: he certainly must not see the greatness of his destination, and the nobility of his origin. Imagination, that flattering impostor, hurries him in search of happiness from chimera to chimera; the experience of every instant should cure his delusion; his delusion remains in spite of experience: born to the lofty ambition of

an infinite good, his fears and hopes, his views and designs, his profoundest meditations are still obstinately inclosed within the little spot that intervenes between his cradle and the grave! his days are all past in the midst of humiliation and care, only to die overwhelmed with riches and surrounded with splendour! Truly hath the prophet spoken, "The way of peace they know not, and there is no judgment in their goings; they have made themselves crooked paths, whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace."

But whatever may be the folly and turpitude of these sacrifices that are made for a perishable interest, my object is, more properly, to evince the too universal prevalence of selfishness over the feelings of humanity. Great God! were I to draw a contrast between the sums that are daily lavished in frivolous and degrading gratifications, and the trifle occasionally, perhaps annually, consecrated to the finest of all human affections; were I to say that the passions and vices of the day are unfathomable gulphs into which money is poured

without decency or limitation; that the great object of contention among the rich is, who shall manifest the happiest invention of expensive follies; that play alone swallows up more resources than would educate and feed all the orphans of the nation, who could fairly or honestly accuse me of misrepresentation? And who that studies and contemplates the deplorable increase of misery in these times, but must shudder at such a crying misapplication of God's bounty? Where, let me conjure you to reflect, is the gratitude we owe to him? What have we that we have not received? Is it to indulge this abominable prodigality that he has mercifully distinguished us from those multitudes that suffer all the excesses of human misery? Which of us can look round at the spectacles which every where present themselves, without feeling the most ardent acknowledgment to Heaven for the blessings he enjoys? There is not probably one man in this vast congregation, who commands not even some of the superfluities of life; not one, at least, without a sufficiency of its common comforts: but how many has a gracious Providence endowed with large

hereditary fortunes? how many with the most abundant mediocrity? how many enriched by successful industry? how many conducted by the hand to lucrative employments? how many, almost fatigued, if I may say so, with increasing prosperity? and shall it be possible that the objects of such tender and special predilection can prove eminently unworthy of it?

Nor is the unexampled, and, I may say, cruel dissipation of money, in such times as the present, confined to the upper orders of society alone. No; the example has descended: and there exists in the middling orders of life a melancholy proof how ruinous example is when it beams from an height. The lustre of station attracting every eye brings its habits in contact with the whole body of the community. The manners of the great are a volume of established precedents, which their inferiors consult to fortify themselves with a case in point for every possible trespass against virtue and economy: hence the industrious are led to copy an expensive mode of living, which ultimately leads to bankruptcy

and ruin; and hence it follows irresistibly, that, if the higher orders of the community are desirous any longer of being distinguished from those, whom they are pleased to consider as beneath them, the only way I can perceive they have left, is a prompt return to a system of Christian frugality and moderation.

But, I may be told, that, notwithstanding the excesses I complain of, mercy is often remembered. Yes, I confess it: and how should it not be remembered? all human beings occasionally remember mercy; the miser alone excepted. It is the doctrine of all ages and people: in the darkest periods of human reason, when vice the most atrocious was seated upon altars, and honoured by the incense of nations, sensibility to distress remained a sacred, though solitary virtue, amidst the prevailing corruptions of the world. In regions bound in by eternal frost, uncivilised and almost inaccessible, where element and sterility combine to render subsistence precarious, and seem to shut up the heart, relief is extended to those whom age or infirmity

renders unable to toil. Why then should we talk of occasionally obeying a sentiment, which in the children of nature is a burning and invariable instinct? Were I to tell the wildest barbarian that our bread is often withheld from the hungry; that some of us are clothed in soft raiment, and wallow in all the enjoyments of luxury and ease, while multitudes are suffered to perish from the absolute want of aliment; while poverty stalks round us ravenous and despairing; while mothers almost devour their young, and orphans dispute offals with the brutes; all barbarous and uncivilised as we call him, I should fill his honest heart with astonishment and horror! And yet we flatter ourselves we are merciful! Oh, my friends, we are too apt to give ourselves credit for the practice of a virtue, of which, in fact, we as yet know little but the name. I am positive when I say this; What pleasure can I have in uttering any thing like reproach? what object in view, but the vindication of truth, and the good of the cause with which you yourselves have entrusted me? I am, in fact, but pleading your own persons against your own passions. Lay

then your hands honestly on your hearts, and decide the question yourselves; I desire no other umpire between us. Look into the divine volume of our law; mark the rule of mercy it lays down, and confess the immensity of our distance from it. What does it declare us to be, but trustees to the estate? Does it not adjudge every shilling we can spare from the reasonable support of our stations, to the widow and the orphan, or charge us with their blood? The observation, you may tell me, is trite; but is it the less awful for being trite? Is our security the greater, because every effort of the human mind, and every pulse of zeal have long been exhausted to warn us of our danger? Is it possible to believe in future retribution, and not to know some uneasy moments on this head? Is it possible then, that rational and thinking beings must not occasionally tremble at the uncertainty of life, and certainty of judgment? How many might I mention, in the very first class of our community, who have passed to their account since I last met you in the cause of these children in the course of a little year; some of whom, I could mention several, who

heard me on that day, and, for aught I know, with the same tranquillity and indifference, or the same assurance of many years, that you may now! They are gone; and whatever their eternal destiny may be, this is certain, that it may be ours to consider the wealth of worlds as a happy exchange for one hour of that time which is still within our power. Tell me, is there a single Christian before me, who, if the offer were made him at this moment, would be satisfied to stake his salvation on the question of his charity? Oh not one! and yet our consciences are at rest; we flatter ourselves we are merciful. Heavens! If there be any just ground for such a thought, why has it become necessary to prostitute, in some degree, the most sacred of all functions for the purpose of moving and inspiring us to the practice of this virtue? Why has the pulpit been obliged to descend to the very language of flattery, in order to extort from your vanity what it is hopeless of obtaining from a principle of religion? Why is it become necessary to hold out, on almost every occasion of this nature, the too dangerous doctrine, "that Charity covereth a multitude

of sins;" and thus run the hazard of misleading you on the subject of your own salvation, in order to force you to become the instrument of salvation to others? Why are we obliged to use the arts and colouring of profane eloquence to make appeals to your passions? To search and probe the great body of human misery to the bone? To bring it, I may say, before your hearts, naked and expiring, quivering and disjointed? To expose all its miseries and horrors? To mingle our own tears with the tears of the unhappy objects that invoke us? And after all, why do we often fail? Yes, most deplorably fail? Why does misery often perish in the horrors of famine? or, What is infinitely worse, shoot up in swarms of infamy and guilt?

"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth."

Having endeavoured to the best of my power, to enforce this noble and disinterested maxim of the apostle, it remains to consider the case which calls us to the exercise of it. But if, in considering the ge-

neral duty of charity, I have had to struggle with a subject not a little exhausted; what field does the education of poor children present, but one equally barren? The fact is, that the many eminent blessings flowing to society from attention to this object, the magnitude and variety of public evils resulting from the neglect of it, the superior happiness, or superior misery of these our fellow creatures, according as they are early protected or abandoned, are all themes so completely worn out, so ground down, if I may use the expression, by repeated attrition, that I should consider it a manifest abuse of your indulgence, to trouble you with any of them. That your indulgence is great, I have long had reason to declare. I ought therefore to presume on that indulgence but as little as possible. There is a circumstance however, regarding your institution, which I am called on to mention; and which I do with the more confidence and willingness, as notwithstanding what my zeal for the cause I have in hand, may have induced me to say in the preceding part of this discourse, I know you are not unacquainted with it. When first I

had the happiness of appearing in behalf of these children, their number consisted of thirty or thirty-two, I am not positive which: I took the liberty to remonstrate on the smallness of that number; you felt with what justice, and increased it to forty; there has it stood: there, during a long term of eight years, has it stood: and some of them such years! Great God! No not a single child has been added! As we stand in the presence of the eternal God, and hope for eternal life, how can this be justified? how can we reconcile it with the commonest feelings of humanity? how rest on our beds in peace, when we reflect what it is in our power to do, and what we have omitted to do? what inexpressible happiness we might diffuse, what inexpressible happiness we have deliberately withheld? Is it in the want of means I am to seek for an apology? No: the question is mockery. We are beyond exception the wealthiest parish in the metropolis; and almost as well able to maintain any given number of orphans, as we are forty. What will you say when I tell you, that in the parish of St. Werburgh, a parish exclusively composed

of tradesmen and shopkeepers, there are forty children dieted, clothed, and educated? Who can be ignorant of it? Who can be ignorant, that while God in his inscrutable judgment has spared you, he has afflicted thousands and thousands of your brethren. Who is to learn, that a long want of employment among your poor, added to the numbers that have engaged, or shed their blood in the public service, have caused orphans and destitute children to multiply in the most horrible proportion? Who so uncandid as to deny this fact? I tell you, did my words burn like coals of fire, they could not convey the greatness of the call upon you! No, never in justice, should a minister of mercy descend from this place, until he discovered by your countenances and emotions, that you felt the necessity, and were determined to the exercise of superior mercy at this day. I say, though I should continue to speak until my observations became incoherent, and language confused, there would be still a mode left of conveying the ardent wishes of my heart; you would understand at least my tears; they are the true language

of intreaty; and as long as there was one pulse of feeling within me for the world of perishing infants without these walls, these eyes should flow to soften and conjure you! What my friends! in the Old and New Testament, we see astonishing influences even of divine interposition in the day of calamity! Elijah on the top of a bleak and desert mountain; without any resource but a firm confidence in his God. Was he suffered to perish? No: even the most rapacious of birds was charged with the ministry of a protecting providence, and brought him his nutriment at morn and eve. And how did that vast multitude which Moses conducted into the wilderness, subsist during a course of forty years? The hand of divine mercy spread their food upon the earth, and gave them water from the body of a dry rock. Think of the five thousand people that followed and invoked Jesus Christ in the extremity of hunger and distress: did he refuse to succour them? did he spurn them? No: the Gospel tells us expressly, that his heart bled for them. Where, says he, shall we find bread that they may eat? A small quantity of provi-

visions grew, under his miraculous power, into profusion. The multitude was filled, their gratitude was unbounded; and they retired loudly proclaiming him to be the Messiah that was to come; more convinced perhaps of this truth, from the uncommon benignity of his character, than from the prodigy which they had witnessed. And look to the first ages of Christianity, and see the faithful make, on occasions like the present, what great and almost incredible sacrifices. Yes, in defect of all other resources, we find them selling their very persons, surrendering their very liberty into the hands of barbarians; and leaving the price of this first of human blessings behind them, for the relief of their famishing brethren. What a prodigy of humanity? Great God! And shall we, whom he has fondly excepted from a too general visitation, deliberately refuse to vindicate his providence? Shall we turn aside from such depths and abundance of human misery, as perhaps never before occurred in the history of any people. O! it is not by a delegated voice that misery should implore; it should plead for itself; you should see it

with your own eyes, hear it with your own ears; one beseeching glance from a famishing child, one sigh from the breaking heart of its parent, would go deeper into yours, would do more with you in a moment, than my words, were I speaking to you for ever! What power have I to affect you? None; comparatively at least, none. When my mind represents you shocked and abashed at scenes that would be new to you, comparing them with your own situation, dreading, at every instant, some more horrible discovery, the God of mercy, spurring you to minute investigation, your nature recoiling at every issue of it: in fine, putting this solemn question to your souls, is it possible that the deplorable beings we now see before us, separated from the living and the dead, holding to the world only by a sense of their sufferings, can be creatures of the same God with ourselves, members of the same society, our brethren in Christ Jesus? Oh then it is that humanity would triumph, then would the gates of your institution fly open to remedy the unavoidable consequences to the living, and quiet the shades of the dead. Then would the mourning widow

forget the bloody day that deprived her babes of a father and protector; since they had found fathers and protectors in you. I tell you that the utmost effort of the ministry can do comparatively nothing. To be roused to the height of mercy you should have personal experience of what passes around you; you will then carry the impression to your graves. Sermons and preachers are rapidly forgotten. One single morning devoted to explore the recesses of misery in this metropolis would preach to you through life; would stamp you merciful for ever. While I press you to an increase of your institution, full well do you know the necessity of it. But alas! I want the power of determining you, of melting you down to the extent of my wishes. God has not given it to me; if he had, be assured I would use it: I would encircle you with my little clients, hang them on your garments, teach their fatherless arms to entwine about your knees, their innocent eyes to fasten upon yours, their untainted lips to cry Mercy, for we perish! Do you think you could resist? I would bid you observe the force of nature in the breast of a parent. Mo-

thers crying to you with extended arms to save their children. No, think not of us, would they say, We are satisfied to suffer. Let us expire, if you will, we shall expire in peace, but save, O save our children! Many of you are parents yourselves. There would you see all personal considerations swallowed up in the immensity of parental feeling. Peace and serenity spread over the face of woe. Even death itself losing its sting, at the prospect of life and happiness being ensured to these objects which nature has endeared to us above our own existence. Do you think you could resist the luxury which such a moment held out to you? Oh, how truly has it been said, that far better is it for man to go into the house of mourning than into the house of joy. Think not that the earnestness with which I address you is mere trick and artifice. No, no! no such thing. No, believe me, were I imploring your charity for the mother that bore me, my heart and soul could not be more in that cause than it is in this. Suspect me not then of using any efforts, but such as are, unhappily, suggested and called for by the real complexion of the case. But suppose

I did, would it not be allowable? Is there any fear that charity may rise above the level of necessity? Did it ever approach it, even in times of comparative blessedness to the present? Was there ever a day in the memory of any man who hears me when there was not room for more mercy? What greater result can my most sanguine expectations present at the conclusion of this hour, than your adoption of ten or twenty additional orphans at most out of a swarm? And give me leave to ask, whom should the ministry press, at this awful day, and in this cause, if not you? Where should their most zealous and strenuous efforts be used to obviate the uncommon overflow of wretched children if not among the rich? Were I addressing an assembly of inferior circumstances and condition, it would be absurd as well as fruitless to talk on this subject. I might indeed stir up their feeling and draw the tear from their eye—but tears are not charity: misery requires relief as well as pity. The natural protectors of many other institutions are not equal to the support of the few children they contain; but you, my friends, do possess the means of great and ma-

jestic efforts towards the decrease of a public calamity, and with these means the most impressible hearts. You are therefore the fairest objects to assail, as you also are the most likely to be subdued. Can I forget that during the rigour of last winter, a collection for the relief of your poor made from door to door, where it was easy, you know, to avoid the question, even without the necessity of a personal appearance, produced, in the short space of three days, the sum of seven hundred pounds; an uncommon exertion of charity, I will say, considering that it took place immediately after the contribution made for the support of these infants. Not a single refusal, I understand, did the gentlemen who collected receive in the whole course of their circuit. On the contrary, every where abundance, and in many instances profusion. No pressing intreaty was used with you; no obstinate or (as I fear you now find it) presuming length of solicitation. The claims of your petitioners were written on the face of nature, on the hoary mantle of the earth, and conveyed in the bitterness of the breeze. In looking through your casements you natu-

rally reflected on the special comforts and blessings you enjoyed, and raised your eyes to Heaven in fervent thanksgiving, while your imaginations tenderly depicted the horrible reverse of cold, nakedness, and famine. The case was clear, and you were men. The delegates of misery had but to come, and see, and conquer. You gave, and gave chearfully, and gave greatly. And is it from such hearts I can dread a repulse on this occasion? Is it only in the temple of the eternal God, where he himself conjures you through the lips of his minister, that I can suppose you to exist with impoverished feelings and inferior souls? Here, when the question is not to bestow a transitory relief, but to perform an act of permanent and inconceivable mercy. In that word, perhaps, lies the difficulty—permanent mercy! You look to future years. You dread, perhaps, a permanent incumbrance. Your institution once increased can never be diminished! Your hearts are with me, I know, as is your most intimate conviction that the measure is loudly called for: but the wretched prudence of the world whispers you to beware of entailing on your-

selves an additional and immutable burthen! Spurn the inglorious thought—Let glorious Humanity triumph over the world in your hearts. Familiarity will render light an additional burden which you know and feel to be necessary.

# SERMON II.

[For the Meath Hospital.]

ST. LUKE, c. xvi. v. 25.

"*Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*"

THESE words, my brethren, form part of the well known parable, of the rich man and Lazarus; which appears to me, when considered in its main object, to be one of the most awful lessons of instruction, contained in the gospel of Christ, and perhaps the most necessary at this day to press on the serious reflection of Christians. For this reason, that the dreadful epitaph which an immortal hand has traced on the tomb of that unfortunate victim, goes unequivocally to denounce a complexion of life and manners almost generally found compatible with perfect tranquillity of

conscience. It is not the rich alone that are concerned in this case, but all those who fall into the desperate error of imagining that the way of salvation may be strewed with flowers, and an immortal prize aspired to and obtained, without treading in the steps of a crucified leader: or in other words without a course of active and laborious virtue. To this strange and undefinable misconception of the religion of Christ, the case before us gives a melancholy negative. For it does not present us with the issue of a life of iniquity, but with the fate of a man, whose only offence was that of building his tabernacle here; that of being satisfied with the felicity he enjoyed on this earth; and in the bosom of sensuality and pleasure, basely forgetting that he was born for a nobler purpose. This was the sole cause of his reprobation; the luxurious gratification in which he was sunk, excluded equally from his life, the violence of great passions, and the efforts of virtue. It was exactly that state which may be compared to the deceitful security of a calm on the bosom of the ocean, while the insensible progress of a current draws

the vessel to the gulph. Not a single action which the generality of the world would call distantly reprehensible, does the Gospel record of him, save that in the distraction of excessive prosperity, he paused not to contemplate and relieve the miserable object that lay in his path; for the rest, all that we can collect from his history is, that he was rich, and betrayed propensities contemptible but not depraved: and yet, notwithstanding a way of life so perfectly free from the shadow of any thing heinous, we find him doomed to bear everlasting evidence of this truth, that it is but too possible to be at once completely justified by the maxims of the world, and wofully condemned by the rules of religion. "And the rich man also died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes."

How comes it, my brethren, that even the most zealous efforts of the ministry are unequal to produce profound impressions on the subject of such a destiny? By some unaccountable infatuation, too many Christians either affect to disbelieve this point of doctrine altogether, or confess it but languidly. Like the man who whistles

as he traverses, at the midnight hour, the gloomy residence of the dead, in order to support his sinking courage against the terror of the scene, we labour, by wretched and untenable reasoning, to bear down in our hearts the rising apprehension of a terrible futurity. The fact is, there is nothing so evident, that man will not sport with and controvert, when he sees only through the glass of his passions. We have a striking example of this in the obstinate perversity of the Pharisees; who, though intimately persuaded of the divinity of our Lord's mission, so clearly foretold in the scriptures, yet attempted to puzzle and betray him by captious questions on religion and policy. They were answered; they scrutinized his morals; they found them Purity itself; they attended to every word of his language, its wisdom and elevation astonished. They asked for miracles; the lame walked, the blind saw, the graves gave up their dead. Seemingly baffled at all points, passion and self-interest had still a resource. They discovered, that this wonder-working man was assisted by Beelzebub himself. This is the exact image of those Christians, whose hearts are too corrupt, and passions too

much engaged with the present scene, honestly to admit, or even bear the thought of a principle in religion that inexorably devotes them. Miserable weakness! to act a part in one season of life, and put it down at another: to pass youth in the fashionable parade of despising vulgar prejudice, often in the bold and intrepid language of incredulity; and old age in the tremblings of victorious faith. What does it avail to defy the sacred truths of religion for a few years, when our last moments invariably avenge them? No, my brethren, the eye of the ministry I exercise is not so organized, as to see nothing but defects. It is the pride and consolation of our lives, to acknowledge and do justice, where we have room, to the virtue and piety of those whom we are destined to instruct; but never can it be allowable to cover the gulph to which mistaken notions of religion lead, with flowery and inviting verdure that is to entertain the false security of our fellow Christians by the concealment or softening of necessary truth. We have no authority over it; we owe you, according to the expression of St. James in the word

word which we announce "an honest and faithful glass;" we are to view with horror that temporal gospel, if I may so speak, that is interpreted by the passions, and accommodated to the delicacy and manners of Semichristians. We are to know and preach only the gospel of Jesus Christ! the gospel of justice, as well as of mercy, whose immutability represents the essence of that being from whose bosom it has emanated. This is our duty. It is, alas! but too necessary there should be a tribunal firm and immutable, to unveil and blast the designs and artifices of our great and powerful enemy. Let me then enquire, with that liberty which the ministry allows, and that ardent anxiety, which it is right to inspire for the spiritual interest of our fellow Christians, what ground of confidence there can be under a course of life, of which we have before us this day the example and the fate? I would appeal to your own hearts, whether I should be justified in saying, that the notoriously prevailing rage of present Christians, for pleasure and dissipation, for every idle and luxurious pursuit, in the face of a system,

whose very soul is spirituality, and every line a precept of rigorous self-denial, ought not to produce serious alarm? "Is it not written, that we are predestinate only as we conform to the image of Jesus Christ." Did he content himself with leading a life devoid of guilt? with rendering unto Cæsar what belonged to Cæsar? and defying the eagle eye of his enemies on the score of his morals? did he recommend in his instructions, and display in his example, those qualities only which the world admires, untainted honour, scrupulous integrity, disinterested generosity, fidelity in promise, humanity to the poor? was this the exclusive perfection to which he called us? He, whose practice and doctrine proclaim, by a thousand organs, that the edifice of Christian salvation can only be raised on the wreck of crucified nature; he who declared "That whosoever beareth not his cross, and cometh after him, cannot be his disciple; that the kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, that no man can serve God and the world, that those who are full and laugh now, shall one day mourn and weep, that the world shall rejoice; but that his disciples

shall be sorrowful, and their sorrow turned into joy;"—in a word, he who from the first moment of his mortal life to the final consummation of his sufferings, was eminently every thing that he taught;— this is our model, without conformity to which, to the utmost of our strength, we are lost, though we should be otherwise as immaculate as angels. For it is not the exemption from guilt, nor even a life the most irreproachable in the eyes of men, joined to the possession of a thousand moral virtues, that constitutes the Christian; but the study of Jesus Christ, and the spirit as well as the letter of his gospel copied into our practice, and idolized in our hearts. But how can it be said that this truth is generally felt and acknowledged? If the Christian be bound to continual warfare with all his corrupt affections, and Christians will yet nourish those domestic enemies; if the Christian be not of this world, and Christians will yet deem it compatible with their hopes to be the slaves and apologists of its maxims and pursuits; if the Christian, in the midst of laborious efforts to work out his own salvation, and promote that of others, yet

trembles at the sentence that may await him; and Christians in the whirl of vanity and folly, without thought of that evangelical perfection to which they should aspire, yet live in profound peace with themselves: if the Christian be a traveller, who sighs at every step for the view of his everlasting country, and Christians would yet establish in this valley of tears their everlasting abode; if every hour and moment of the Christian's life be full before God, and Christians have little to present in their lives but a miserable void; if the Christian receives afflictions as peculiar mercies, and considers the highest degree of human prosperity as no more than the summit of a precipice, and yet Christians recoil from the one, and attach every charm to the other; in a word, if the Christian be all spiritual, and we, my brethren, all material and earthly; take but one example, and you will have a representation, imperfect, but not exaggerated, of that system of levity and pleasure which bids fair to prescribe against the Gospel. Suppose a woman, at the opening of the week, taking a delightful review of her various engagements to misemploy it, pas-

sing each morning, sometimes in the bosom of vacancy at home, and in an attentive enumeration of the dull and heavy hours that delay the frivolous scene of her passion, but often in sauntering or rolling through the public streets, without an object but to catch the attention of the equally idle of the other sex, or excite the envy of her own; afterwards sallying forth to the revel, or empty pageantry of the night, at a time when reason and constitution would, in obedience to the wants of nature, demand retirement and repose; and often pushing this furious avidity for dissipation into the blushing beams of a returning sun; miserable should chance or indisposition prevent her, in a single instance, from being surrounded, abroad or at home, by a circle of this splendid misery; a stranger in her family, her wretched children, if children she has any, committed to the mercy, the inattention, the example of menials, without the benefit of a mother's tenderness, instruction and care; and this blessed week, which is the history of every other, only redeemed by occasionally offering to God the wanderings of a mind stupified and

corrupted by the never-ending worship of the world! Is this Christianity, or is it an exaggerated picture of the manners that reign? I appeal to your own souls. What do we behold from the commencement of one season of the year to the close of it, but multitudinous counterparts of such a life? The young and the old, the matron and the girl, the man and the boy, confounded in the same chace of pleasure, in all its despicable varieties and ruinous extravagance? But what were I to speak of the prevailing indecency, the growing nakedness of female attire? Is it possible for the ministry to be silent, when purity of heart (which I am willing to suppose) is made consistent with the very flag and dress of an Impure? God forbid I should doubt that such infinitely unchristian departure from the strictness of our rule did not proceed rather from the oblivion or misconception, than the secret or open contempt of it. And yet they who judge with more severity might say, and say with appearance of justice, that though vice be recoiled from in practice, outward circumstances, when glaring, may afford more than a presumption, that it has at least a place in the will;

and weak and imperceptible, alas, we know, is the line of defence between strength of inclination, and the misfortune of guilt!

Suffer the word of exhortation, my friends. In whatever we say, we mean no personal or malignant application. Our shafts are cast at random, we are ignorant where they may wound. Our representations are general; it is yourselves, my brethren, that either individually feel, or transfer the likeness where your experience sees it to be clear. Suffer the word of exhortation. Let this unhappy offspring of ever-innovating fashion, for no more I am persuaded it is, let it no longer feast the eyes of the libertine, and afford matter of reproach to his tongue. Paradoxical as this double effect may appear, it is founded in positive experience. Much do women deceive themselves, if they imagine, that their deviations from strict modesty and reserve can be arraigned only from the pulpit of God, or by the voice of their austerer fellow Christians. The very men who surround them in the assemblies of vanity, and pour into their ears the all-fascinating incense of flattery, are often, when

in the society of each other, their cruellest censors: and will remember and name with bitter accuracy, every striking example of the error I deplore; and with refined malignity make appearance a pretext for the abominable liberty of sporting with unsullied reputations. This is the fate of woman! Her worst enemies are often they whom she most studies to please; as her best friends are certainly they who watch over her present and eternal interests; and at the hazard of displeasing, fear not to call her to the only true glory of her character. In the name of a pure religion, and its eternal Author, I call upon parents neither to countenance this evil by their example; or, contrary to the solemn reproach of conscience, criminally connive at it in their children. They cannot be ignorant, that every vice is completed, by not providing against its insensible advance at first. They cannot be ignorant, that dreadful calamity to female innocence has often ensued, not because it is too weak to resist the decided tempter; but because it perceived not the gradations that beguiled it to the precipice. They cannot be ignorant of the solemn account they have to render.

They cannot be ignorant, that Jesus Christ is the parent of their children, much more than themselves; that he has redeemed them with his blood; marked them in the cradle with the seal of the new covenant, and entrusted them to their vigilance and protection; as the daughter of Pharaoh did the child she had saved, to the mother of Moses; "Take and nurse this child for me, and I will give thee thy wages." He will demand those precious deposits; and depend upon it, if there be an indisputable truth under Heaven, it is this, that if our children are made victims to a divinity to whom we sacrifice their salvation; though we otherwise appear before God with all accumulated virtues, our wages will be blood for blood, eternity for eternity! Of this enough.

But it may be said, is the Gospel then that austere and gloomy system, that commands us to renounce enjoyments naturally arising from social intercourse? No, my brethren, religion, being founded on benevolence, cannot be the enemy to any gratification that innocently contributes to the happiness of life. St. Paul expressly directs Chris-

tians, to rejoice with those that rejoice, as well as weep with them that weep; and Jesus Christ himself we know was seated at the table of the Pharisee, and sanctified by his presence the marriage feast of Cana. But we are not to confound what our rule clearly admits, with what the temper of the world would suppose it to admit. Though it may in a degree lead to repetition, I will submit the difference in a word. Never to appear in society but with a view to improvement and edification; never to keep up a single acquaintance the most distantly dangerous to our spiritual intercourse; never to cultivate friends, or even relatives that are not religious and virtuous; never to omit rendering, in the particular duties of our station, the means of salvation to ourselves and others. This is the *Gospel.* — To neglect occupations the most sacred and important; to run indiscreetly, and without choice, into every circle that will admit us; to consume our precious time in idle visits and ceremonials; to live only in the confusion of night and day, amidst laborious amusements, that always end in inevitable disgust, that capital enemy, which we are

eternally banishing, and eternally calling up; this is the *World.* Inviolably to respect our superfluities as the patrimony of the poor; to be distinguished in high station, neither by too much magnificence or too much simplicity, to regulate our train and expense invariably below our rank and revenues: to think more of decency than of lustre and show; this is the *Gospel.* To be swayed in those things, only by established fashion, however wild, extravagant and contemptible; to labour who shall outdo the other in excessive and luxurious entertainments; to starve a family for a month in order to glitter for a night; to exhibit with study and affectation, brilliant, and expensive baubles on the person, and the person without attire; and unthinkingly sacrifice to all vanity, what our hearts incline us to devote to a more sacred purpose; this is the *World.* To take part in conversations only in which modesty has never to blush, in which reason has every thing to gain, and the sacred cause of religion and morality finds edification and support; this is the *Gospel.* To relish the unintelligible jargon of mixed and tumultuous assemblies;

to endeavour in all conversations, rather to shine than to instruct; to high season it with the salt of sarcasm, or slander; delicately and artificially to envelope the poison of impurity and corruption; to be silent from self-interest or complaisance, when religion is reviled by the impious and libertine; perhaps, infamously join in the abuse of what we inwardly revere; this is the *World.* Never to engage in play, but on a scale the most moderate, or consider that, or any other allowable relaxation, but as the means of returning with recruited spirits to the performance of every social, public, and domestic duty; this is the *Gospel.* To render play an occupation and a traffic; a blind ungovernable passion, that lays us open to the arts and conspiracies of the more trained in the profession; that fills the soul with base and malignant affections, the feelings of avarice, the bitterness of envy; the rage that boils at loss and disappointment; nightly to grope for an object that engrosses every reflection of the mind, and every desire of the heart; that every instant, under the capricious empire of chance, produces miserable shiftings of ecstacy and pain, and, under the law of polite man-

ners, commands the torment of outward ease, and countenance serene, when the storm is most violent and afflicting within; this is the *World*. This is one of those precious pursuits to which it eagerly recurs for enjoyment, and would reconcile with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is unnecessary to pursue the contrast any further.

Thank God we have many Christians in the midst of us, whose practice fully vindicates and gloriously reflects the rule as I have laid it down. We have them in the highest departments of life: we have them in the humble bosom of mediocrity. The example they display, has been the example of true Christians in all times and ages, all of whom, whether in elevation or obscurity, in the cares and distraction of public, or the leisure and repose of a private station, have worked out their salvation, by bearing their cross, and turning aside from the Babylon of worldly pleasure; and persuaded I am, that whatever our passions may suggest, and force us to pursue, our convictions are all, with the propriety and restraint of the rule. What indulgence, then, my brethren, can

we look for, from the Sovereign and terrible Searcher of hearts, when the moment we breathe from unnatural repletion, that is the moment we are allowed to think, we surely condemn ourselves. Thus, my brethren, shall we one day be judged. Our convictions, our remorse, will be opposed to our actions; our language to our secret sentiments; our secret sentiments to our public practice; ourselves to ourselves; and our souls before the tribunal of God, be at once the criminal and the witness against us. These are truths that ought to impress, and will, when the brilliant veil that obstructs the full view of our errors is torn away; though, probably, too late. Let us remember the answer which Abraham made to the victim in my text, when he implored Lazarus to convey to his five brethren a solemn warning from his fate! No; "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them; for if they hear them not, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead!"

Having shown, from the awful example before us, and the general doctrine of the

Gospel, that a life of pleasure and indulgence, however free from vice or immorality, cannot accord with the hope of salvation; it would remain naturally to enquire what superiority we have over the subject of our parable, on the point of attention to the calamities of our fellow-creatures. Though it be clear, that our blessed Lord did not intend to submit, in the neglected case of Lazarus, an instance of deliberate inhumanity, but a melancholy evidence, that, when the soul is immersed in the enjoyments of sense, every duty whatsoever is easily overlooked; there is yet something so shocking in the exhibited contrast of a rich and gross sensualist, breathing thick at the table of luxurious vanity, and a famishing wretch, panting for its very crumbs, that we involuntarily turn all our thoughts to that inscrutable distinction which God has made in the fortunes of his creatures, and the consequent most sacred obligation of mercy. But wide and instructive as this field is, I have already taken up too large a portion of your time to pursue it, and therefore pass to the object of the day.

It cannot be necessary at this day to descant, in detail, on the merits of the institution for the support of which we are met. My predecessor in this function has for a course of years, without interruption, and with a degree of pathos rarely given to any man, submitted the result of that minute and laborious investigation, which nothing but the utmost degree of interest could have inspired. What then, my brethren, can remain for me? Is it to repeat that the divine example of Jesus Christ is embodied in a human institution? Healing diseases, giving sight to the blind? almost animation to the grave? binding up every wound, meeting every sad and cruel disaster? and, like the God it represents, dismissing in peace to the bosom of transported families, the staff of their existence, and source of all their joys and comforts. Is it to repeat, that, in this awful repository of divine visitation, multiplied cases every hour occur, that no human feeling can witness without horror; which are treated with extraordinary skill; nursed with extraordinary tenderness; soothed under the torments of frightful operations by the lips of

constitutional humanity; and that for every example of fatality that occurs, there are thousands of almost miraculous recoveries? Is it to repeat the noble and disinterested assiduity of both faculties, who fly at all hours, by night and by day, at the call of their afflicted fellow-creatures, without fee or reward, and often generously supply aid and comforts from their private resources, which the means of this institution are inadequate to afford? Is it to repeat, that this godlike temple of life and health is infinite in its grasp of salvation, taking in the wide range of disease and casualty, in this extensive county, and happily rearing its head in a quarter of the metropolis, where the existence of misery is as vast as it is lamentable, and almost every lurking place offers hourly, in one way or another, some spectacle to its mercy? Is it, in fine, to repeat that the number it annually succours, or more properly saves, stands at more than fifteen thousand! and, of course, when we look at the period of its existence, which is more than fifty years, must nearly exceed all credibility. These are the merits of this institution. In a

word, show me any thing of the same nature, in the annals of humanity, to surpass, or even equal it. So invincible is the conviction that has taken place, of its unparalleled service to the wretchedness of this metropolis and county, that I could point out several individuals (at this moment in my view) too cool and circumspect, to be moved in this, or any other cause, without full evidence of its merits, but not the less humane, because thus circumspect, who are known peculiarly to come forward, and contribute largely on this day, and who, I am persuaded, would equally do so, though not a word were uttered in recommendation of the object. Let me for a moment suppose it dissolved, or but feebly supported, what would be the consequence? I defy any Christian, who has an atom of religion or humanity, to think of it without shuddering: why? The impoverished and sequestered parts of the city would present more than the bloody and terrific image of a neglected field of battle: the moans of the expiring, the agonies of the maimed and mutilated, and your living brethren putrifying unto death, in the ray of that sun that

lights you every day, to happiness and enjoyment. Do you think I frame this as the mere language of appeal to your feelings? No, as God liveth, I mean no more than the simple exposition of a case, which I conceive to be as much beyond description, as it would be unavoidable. But it is impossible for me to produce suitable impressions. It is the misfortune of the ministry, to want on these occasions what nothing can supply, an appeal to the living evidence. It would be necessary to transport an assembly of this nature to the retreats of suffering humanity. It is there that a preacher might be easily eloquent, and sure to impress. It is there that, free from all restraint, without fear of being charged with exaggeration, he might make you behold, in all its dreadful variety, the consequence of wanting, or not sufficiently supporting, an institution of this nature. There the first movement of our souls, would be fixed astonishment; to this would succeed the uplifted eye of ardent thanksgiving for the advantages of our condition; to this the luxurious sensation of ineffable pity: to this, not the cold and hesi-

tating calculation, what we shall bestow, but the rapid, and undeliberating profusion of mercy. We would retire, my brethren, tortured, happy, improved for ever. All calamity whatever, when retired from observation, is doubly affecting. We conceive a kind of mitigation attached even to the fruitless God help you, of a gaping world; but in the dreary nakedness of the dismal recess, every dire visitation wears a face of sublime horror. Though he who on the unmade bed of torture, whether from disease or accident, languishes and perishes unassisted and unknown, be eminently wretched; yet the richest, with all the aids they can receive from the skill of an attentive faculty, and the countless comforts which affluence can supply, still experience the extremities of disease to be intolerable, and often look to death as a blessing. Great God! what then must the case be, where man, in the same situation, seems equally abandoned, by heaven and earth? where famine is the consequence of arrested toil? where families in consternation, look round, without hope, or prospect of relief? where the very covering of the dying victim is often sent by his

afflicted heart to support their existence? where the very source of tears is dried up? where deep despair, extorting the language of imprecation against Providence, presents the horrible combat between religion and nature? O Charity! thou principle of great souls! how glorious are thy works! Thou createst a new world in the moral and physical order. Thou preventest a deluge of indigence! Thou preventest a deluge of vice! Thou throwest an immortal guard round virgin purity! Thou recallest not the dead, but thou givest life, as on this day, life and health to the diseased and the expiring! And Oh! how extraordinary, my brethren, is the goodness of God, to have attached merit to a virtue, which carries with it here below, around us and within us, its own inexpressible reward!

My brethren, I have laid before you, as concisely as I could, the merits of the object, and the consequence that would follow from the want or even the neglect of it. I need not inform you that its only resource is one hundred pounds annually from Parliament, as the general Hospital of this County, ad-

ded to the result of this day: all that it has hitherto been able to accomplish, is to provide thirty beds, for the more desperate cases, though the house offers capacity for more than seventy. If your nature be not changed, you will give more than a sigh to this shocking circumstance. And yet, notwithstanding a scale so miserably contracted, the number of intern patients has amounted in the course of ten years to two thousand two hundred and nineteen, which added to the externs in the same time, makes a whole of one hundred forty-eight thousand two hundred and nineteen, which is about fifteen thousand per year. I do not know what this day has been destined, in the designs of God, to present; but this I know, that if it be not great, it cannot be for want of solemn conviction on this point. I am not discouraged by the language I hear;—That this appeal came too late; that the town is swept by the multiplicity of calls upon it; that so many wealthy and benevolent characters, are absent in another country;—it is madness to think, that contributions on these occasions can maintain their past glorious level. It is, however,

that madness which I confess I am afflicted with. It has not hitherto been destitute of reason. Some seasons are now elapsed, since those melancholy forebodings have been on the wing in every circle. Yet it has pleased him, who "out of these stones, could raise children unto Abraham;" it has pleased him, in the face of all obstacles, to support his work. What does the event of mercy, still evidently triumphant, prove, but that we know not ourselves? I am, therefore, without fear. I look to you, my brethren, with immoveable confidence. Support your convictions, for convinced you are, of the unspeakable merits of the case. I ask no more. To the humblest, the least gifted individual in this place, I look, as well as to the most prosperous, for a double effort on this day. Bleeding, tender humanity is confined to no order. Many a man, as I once before said, standing in the aisle of the church, unnoticed, and unknown, has given evidence of this truth, that will shine in the book of life for ever. Often is a diamond of the purest water, covered with an encrustation of the coarsest matter. Often have the burning and ungovernable

feelings of compassion even mastered the instinct of self preservation; — witness the widow of Zarepta, from whom the prophet of the Lord was directed to seek shelter and support, in a season of famine; from her whose whole property, under the sun, was "an handful of meal in a barrel, and a drop of oil in a cruse," and yet to him, at the first aspect of his extraordinary misery, did she sacrifice, without a moment's hesitation, the last morsel of herself and child. Let a spark of this divine impulse be known in this case to all around me; and all shall find, like her, a tender and attentive Providence watching over their concerns; covering them, as it did the fleece of Gideon, with the dew of heaven, and giving to each, an increase of an hundred fold. One word more, my brethren. I did that in the first part of this discourse which I conceived to be most inviolably my duty towards God. Oh! let not the freedom of speech I have used, be visited in any instance on the object for which I plead. Deal with me out of this place as you please, but remember, here, that I am the advocate of unparalleled calamity: remember also, that if I

have been so unfortunate as to give offence to any, it is but the surer indication I was right.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, for ever and ever! Amen.

# SERMON III.

PROVERBS, XXXI. 30.

*A woman that feareth the Lord; she shall be praised.*

THE language of the text speaks, in emphatic terms, the nature and the glory of your work. You are assembled to rescue the greatest mass of female innocence, that ever was offered in this nation to public mercy, in any one institution, from consequences, which I shall dwell on in the sequel; and render them what virtuous and Christian women have ever been found, the most powerful instruments of good in the hands of God. The personal happiness and salvation of these children, is the least of the benefits that arise from your present bounty. You plant in their education, the oak, round which the ivy twines and aspires; that is, the example which irresistibly attracts, nay, commands,

in the great cause of virtue and religion. That women are susceptible of stronger and more lasting impressions than men, we see, by the almost invariable constancy and fidelity of their attachments — even the slight tincture of the serious, which their fashionable education imparts, is seldom obliterated by all the hurry and confusion of a life of gaiety and pleasure. You will rarely, perhaps never, see a woman, to whom any idea of religion has been communicated, entirely abandon a compliance with its external duties; or insult its principles, by the language of profaneness and contempt. There is a fervor in the soil of a female heart, which never misses sending up what it receives, be the culture ever so scanty; when abundant, the return is invariably glorious. We have numberless examples of women in the Holy Writings, and in every period of Christianity, that fill us with astonishment, at the sacred sublimity and heroism of their characters — and the history of the Pagan world, particularly the austere and virtuous days of the Grecian and Roman commonwealths, afford likewise the most illustrious

proofs that the *sex*, when properly directed, can be *more* than the rival of *man*, in every action, every sacrifice that goes to dignify and exalt the human name. From the very appearance of female depravity, we recoil, as from something shocking and unnatural; while men the most immoral and abandoned are always overawed, and not unfrequently reformed, by the contemplation of female excellence. Even the most profligate libertines approach it, with a secret reverence which they cannot account for, and are equally unable to repress. Wonderful, that a creature naturally so defenceless, so weak in conformation, so timid in her ways, so unaspiring in her pursuits, so humble in her destination; born, I may say, to serve; should yet, under certain circumstances, possess an empire that nothing can resist, that renders her very silence eloquence, her entreaties law, nay, her presence alone superior to the most awful considerations, in the control of licentiousness and vice. Yet so it is, such has universal experience declared to be the ascendancy of virtue and religion in woman. And here, my brethren, may I not be allowed

to lament the little benefit derived from this signal and blessed distinction. Is the education too generally conferred on the better orders of women of a nature to elicit such fruits? or is it such as even to qualify them for rational and improved intercourse with the other sex? Would not one think, from the shameful neglect of storing their minds even with the common elements of knowledge, that they were ordained by God and nature to be no more than mere sportive toys, or simple instruments of increase? How few do we find who possess any more information on the commonest subjects, than what a sense of their own degradation has enabled them confusedly to pick up, or chance has infused from habits of society with the other sex? Why, in the name of justice, should the native powers and capacity of women, remain so glaringly uncultivated, when all experience has proved them to be such as to admit their aspiring to, and obtaining the most brilliant degree of mental acquirements? Why should they be cut off from the noblest enjoyment next to that of virtue, which a human creature can know? The enjoyment

that flows from the pursuits and inquiries of an enlightened and exercised mind. When I behold a beautiful form, and reflect that underneath so enchanting an appearance there is probably added nothing but what goes to inspire pity or contempt; I am doubly shocked at the cruelty of her destiny, and consider the injustice done her as beyond all human atonement.

If men would only reflect on what they lose, in the neglected cultivation of the female intellect, it is impossible, methinks, but they should determine on more attention to a circumstance so capable of affording the most delightful resource in all intervals of duty or business. The largest portion of our days is passed in the society of women; to what a melancholy condition therefore must a man be reduced, if either constrained to lay the language of his reason aside, or feed on himself in solitary rumination! But the greatest misfortune is, that women are not only trained in a way humiliating to their understandings, but too generally incompatible with the Christian character. I am sure I am not inclined to misrepresent,

nor do I wish to go into particulars; but if we are to judge by established manners, to what must their first breathings have been directed; but to the art of coming as close to propriety as reputation will admit; reconciling every thing with religion, which religion does not formally denounce. What can speak the most distant confidence and security to the soul of a Christian under such a course? Is it that the world, in the midst of which they live, too generally conforms to it? Is it that persons strictly irreproachable do the same? But it ought to be reflected, that before the manners of Christians began to degenerate, things that are now consecrated by usage, were then monstrous singularities. It ought to be considered that we shall be judged by the Gospel, and not by received practice; that whatever has arisen merely from the decay of fervor and piety, are abuses to be deplored, not models to be followed; in a word, that the life of a Christian is too revolting to nature ever to become the taste of the greater number. Suppose I were to tell you from this place, that the Gospel was not in fact so severe a system as it is

generally represented; that to idolize the world, and acquit ourselves to God were things perfectly reconcileable; that there was not the least harm in the breathless pursuit of pleasure, which reason alone pronounces to be unworthy of thinking beings; that Christians were at full liberty to rack their invention in order to diversify and give zest to an eternal round of emptiness and folly; that provided they dispense charity with one hand, they may lavish with the other as much as they please; that religion admitted such compensation; that all they hear about a simple, frugal, and retired life, strict attention to domestic duties, perfect modesty of mien and apparel; a life of prayer, penitence, and self denial, cannot (if they mean any thing at all) be applicable to persons, whose condition, from long prescription, entitles them to more latitude. What opinion would you entertain of this new and very convenient doctrine? Would you consider the man who uttered it, worthy of respect, and better instructed than others in the science of salvation? No, my brethren, you would either openly deride his igno-

vance, or retire with precipitation and horror, from so shocking a profanation of his sacred function. What are we then, my brethren, I may say, but the hypocritical slaves of the world and its pleasures, when we justify aloud, what we condemn in secret; and how confounding will that judgment be, which condemns us on the evidence of our own hearts! Were it possible for Christians to be calm in the course I have described, free as it is from any thing gross and immoral, let them hear the express words of Jesus Christ on the subject "no man can serve two masters." "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." "Woe unto you that are full now, for ye shall hunger! Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep." "Verily I say unto you the world shall rejoice, but ye shall be sorrowful, and your sorrow shall be turned into joy." This, my brethren, is the Gospel. What exception appears on the face of it, in favor of any description of Christians? No, the more elevated we are, the greater our prosperity, the more absolutely indispensible an adherence to the letter of our

profession, the more incessant should our vigilance be; the more declared and lively our faith, the more fervent and continued our prayer; the more heroic our self denial, the more exalted every virtue; because our danger is much greater, and more awful than it would be in an obscurer station; because it is the nature of prosperity to corrupt, to bind us faster to the world, to furnish occasions of vice at every step, to favour and facilitate the indulgence of evil passions; to render abortive all good desires, and extinguish in the soul, all aspiring to a better state, all recollection of God and futurity; above all, because it is a state which Jesus Christ in plain terms has pronounced to be nearly incompatible with salvation.

Were the world to judge us, we might look for the privilege we fancy, of a soft and convenient way; but the world itself will be judged, and he that will judge it, and us too, will not distinguish Christians by their riches, or their rank, but by their merits or demerits, their virtues, or their crimes. Here, will he say, is my law,

I delivered it, without an iota of variation, to the mighty, and the mean. I inquire not therefore what you are, but how you have conformed to it, how you have lived, what use have you made of the talent I confided to you. This will be, my brethren, the terrible question addressed to all. I leave the inference to yourselves, and return, observing only, that no infatuation can be more deplorable, either with respect to our eternal interest, or even the interest of this world, than that which leads us to ruin with our eyes open.

If the sex, in their intercourse, are of the highest importance to the moral and religious state of society, they are still more so in their domestic relations. What a public blessing, what an instrument of the most exalted good is a virtuous Christian mother? It would require a far other pen than mine to trace the merits of such a character. How many perhaps who now hear me, feel that they owe to it all the virtue and piety that adorns them; or may recollect at this moment, some saint in heaven, that brought them into light to

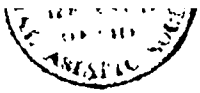
labour for their happiness, temporal and eternal. No one can be ignorant of the irresistible influence which such a mother possesses in forming the hearts of her children, at a season when nature takes in lesson and example at every pore. Confined by duty and inclination within the walls of her own house, every hour of her life becomes an hour of instruction, every feature of her conduct a transplanted virtue. Methinks I behold her encircled by her beloved charge, like a being more than human, to which every mind is bent, and every eye directed; the eager simplicity of infancy inhaling from her lips the sacred truths of religion, in adapted phrase and familiar story; the whole rule of their moral and religious duties simplified for easier infusion. The countenance of this fond and anxious parent all beaming with delight and love, and her eye raised occasionally to heaven in fervent supplication for a blessing on her work. O what a glorious part does such a woman act on the great theatre of humanity, and how much is the mortal to be pitied, who is not struck with the image of such excellence!

When I look to its consequences direct and remote, I see the plants she has raised and cultivated spreading through the community with the richest increase of fruit; I see her diffusing happiness and virtue through a great portion of the human race. I can fancy generations yet unborn rising to prove and to hail her worth, and I adore that God who can destine a single human creature to be the stem of such extended and incalculable benefit to the world. It is scarce possible for the human mind to offer an argument more powerful in support of an institution like this, to those whose views are christian and public.

In the character of wife we find a virtuous woman equally existing for the happiest purposes. Marriage, 'tis true, is often a state in which neither of the parties is much the better for coming together. When all study and consideration of their worth is put out of the question in the motives that bring on the connexion, the result must generally be, and naturally is, both unfavourable to their felicity and their manners. Judge what a miserable business it is that terminates at

best, after a short period, in a compromise to detest each other, with ceremony and politeness, and pursue their respective way of folly or depravity, according to their fancy; a case where terms of endearment are used that the heart disavows, and a mask of union and affection put on in the vain hope of blindfolding the world. Yet such, I fear, is the fate of many, many a pair, and must ever be so where the only inducement to the state is passion, interest, or the pride of alliance. Nothing however is more true than what the Apostle has asserted, that a Christian wife is the salvation of her husband. For surely if any thing can have power to wean a man from evil, it is the living image of all that is perfect, constantly before his eyes, in the person whom, next to God, he is forced to reverence and respect; and who, next to God, he must be assured, has his present and future felicity most at heart; who joins to the influence of her example, the most assiduous attention to please, who knows, from the experience of every hour, where his errors and vices may be assailed with any prospect of success; who is instructed, by the close study of his

disposition, when to speak, and when to be silent; who watches and distinguishes that gleam of reflection which no eye can perceive but her own; who can fascinate by the mildness and humility of her manner, at the moment she expostulates and reproves; who receives him with smiles and kindness, even when conscience smites him the most with a sense of his neglect and unworthiness; who has always a resource at hand in his difficulties, and tender apologies to reprieve him from himself; and a gracious presentiment ever on her lips, that the day will come, when he will know how to value the advantages of good conduct, and the unruffled serenity of virtue. Yes, my brethern, the ministry of such a woman is daily found to work the reformation of our sex, when all other resources fail; when neither misfortune, or shame, or the counsels of friendship, or the considerations of Hell or Heaven have any more effect than the whistling of the elements. Merciful God! how zealously should we therefore labour to diffuse such characters through the people; and how little perhaps do we reflect, when we turn to these orphans, to what



sacred, what glorious ends they are destined.

I have done with this view of my subject. You have seen as clearly, and perhaps as forcibly as could be expected, from a mind exhausted by eternal efforts in this way, the fruits resulting from a virtuous and Christian sex; consequently, part of the merit of this great institution. Let me now proceed to consider it as a security to female innocence, against the extremities of misery and vice. How often, my brethren, have I laid before you the melancholy side of this subject: how often described, in every colour which imagination could supply, that immense variety of wretchedness, to which such objects as these would be more than exposed, without the protection you afford them! How often endeavoured to excite emulation, in support of their cause, by long and separate appeals to the male and female part of my hearers? Is it not time to reflect, that all such grounds, however powerful in moving the springs of our compassion, become puerile, and even disgusting, when too repeatedly insisted on?

Is it not clear, that the institution I plead for, is not to be shaken in the public opinion or heart? Does not every revolving year create a new fervor in its behalf; has it not grown, under the invariable patronage of the upper and middling classes, to be a monument of humanity, in its kind, never surpassed? What then can it require from me, or any other advocate, at this period of its being, but the mere form of an appearance, with the simplest and least laboured exposition of its merits?

"I will go after lovers that will give me bread," is the desperate resolution of unhappy women, expressed in the Prophet Hosea. There have you, in a *word*, as strongly and impressively as thousands could convey, the history of every female creature, that is cast, without resource, on the iniquity of the world. Surely, of all the objects that can present themselves to human commiseration, they must ever have the pre-eminence, while our nature is as it is, the horror of whose fate is thus felt and understood at a glance; and whose spotless purity draws them instinctively to our bosoms, for shelter

and protection, against unnatural defilement. There is but one description of beings in the universe that turn away from the doors of such an assembly as this, with sorrow and disappointment at their hearts: men born for the disaster of the sex, whose brutal and ungovernable passions, mastering every sentiment of pity and generosity in their souls, urge them to deeds beyond the very reach of atonement; nay, the very recollection of which is often so intolerable to themselves, as to require the habit of banishing even reason itself, to mitigate the horror of their feelings. And what aggravates, beyond expression, the enormity of such guilt, is, that where ordinary means are insufficient to the accomplishment of its diabolical purposes, it can veil itself in the deepest hypocrisy; can appeal even to Heaven to witness the purity of its intentions; have recourse to the most horrid profanation of vows and promises; steal an artless creature into perfect reliance on its honour; lead her to her fall, as the innocent and unsuspecting lamb is conducted to the sacrifice; riot for a while on the polluted ruin; then leave her, like a

tender blossom, blasted in its spring, either to droop in silent melancholy to the grave, or rush from despair into the depths of infamy, and revenge her wrongs on the community.

Christians, why is this execrable cast of men so little reprobated in the world? To be formidable and irresistible in this way, has ever been a kind of glory: the more public and notorious they are, the more pride in their steps, the more elevated their brows. There are degrees of guilt you would spurn from your presence, and blush to hold the most distant intercourse with; a man convicted, even in mean and dishonourable actions, is avoided like a pestilence. But from what society, what intercourse, what intimacy, is the libertine by profession excluded? To the scandal of all decency, religion and morals, from few. Nay, it would almost seem, that the infamous title he bears was no small recommendation. For what impression does an allusion to his pursuits usually excite, but that of merriment and laughter; which goes to confirm and encourage, instead of ap-

palling him; which brings complacency into his heart, not the blush of shame into his cheek. When so few turn from him with disgust and horror, has he not a right to conclude, that he is engaged in a career which the world approves? And yet, what is he in fact, but one of the greatest pests a community can be cursed with, whose whole life has no other object but to convert it into a scene of calamity and vice? Who is known to make charity, yes, sacred charity, the pander of his foul appetites; will open his hand with profusion to the necessitous, in order to shut their eyes on the prostitution of their children; who respects not rights that are rigorously respected by very barbarians; would dishonour the family of his host or friend with the same indifference that he would that of the meanest of human creatures; and be as ready to meet, that is, to imbrue his hands in the blood of the father or brother of his victim, as he was to destroy the chief source of their pride and happiness for ever. Alas! how many unfortunate parents, after the fatal dishonour of a child, have never raised their heads more, nor passed

a moment of remaining life but in counting the pulsations of a broken heart. 'Continue, my brethren, your protection to this heavenly asylum of innocence. The strongest censure you can pass on such monsters, for monsters they are, is to snatch the prey from their ruthless fangs. If it be mercy to hold out a hand to the fallen creature, Oh, what transcendant mercy must it be to prevent all that is lovely to the eye of virtue and of sense, from sharing the same fate! Many, many a poor undone creature, that now rolls in the horrible abyss of prostitution, would have lived to be all that I have represented in the former part of this discourse, had she been offered, at the tender season of these orphans, to such mercy as yours. No woman ever voluntarily surrendered the blessing of a fair name: the sensitive plant shrinks not more instinctively from the touch, than the nature of woman from defilement. Many circumstances contribute to render her an easy prey to the wiles and villainy of man; ignorance of God, bitter necessity, neglect of parents, and not unfrequently, in the lower classes, a hellish connivance at the

ruin of their children from base motives of gain. But the love and pride of purity is still twisted with her being, and the last breath of virtue ever consecrated to the fair state from which she falls. Often, in the midst of the most thoughtless and headlong course of vice, will the tear of sad recollection steal down into the empoisoned cup; and though generally she may be found to evince a detestation of the modest and virtuous part of her sex; it is not, believe me, that happy distinction from which she recoils, but from the objects that too strongly remind her of her own infamy and degradation. Continue, I repeat, your protection to these pure and unfriended creatures. What is there in the greatest wealth, when stripped of such luxury? The vilest of the human race often possess it, as well as many of you. It cannot, in itself, render any man respected while living, or his memory, when dead. It confers not in itself one solitary talent, one solitary virtue. It may roll through the public way in gaudiest magnificence, yet sink under the collected scorn of the world. All the ordinary enjoyments it procures are transient, and quickly

forgotten, and many out of the four and twenty hours of every day, namely, those of repose, see its possessor destitute as the meanest slave. It is unequal to remove one pang from the heart, one ache from the head. It leaves us at the opening of the grave; we behold it on the bed of death with frozen indifference, or fruitless avidity; our heirs too often pant for our expiring breath; and naked we pass to the embrace of corruption, with the blessings, or the curses of the unfortunate on our heads; either woeful victims of perverted gifts, or confident heirs to a blessed immortality. Oh, may such be the lot of every individual who hears me. Continue to use the means with which Providence has blessed you, whether moderate or great, as you have hitherto used them. If it would be rash in me to say, what I fear a mistaken zeal has too often asserted, that superior beneficence is omnipotent with God; I may safely say after him, that even a mite cast into the lap of misery, in his name, will not lose its reward. Think, particularly on this great occasion, that you are come, not simply to indulge your feelings

in a case of irresistible temporal interest, but likewise to save immortal souls. Heaven is not more distant from earth, than the importance of the temporal lot of those children is beneath that of their eternal. Little! little does the mere man of feeling know, what a powerful argument this is with a true Christian; or what astonishing sacrifices he is capable of, in such a cause. Let me tell you, what perhaps you do not reflect upon, that in the case of female children, the consideration is, if possible, more paramount.

I am sensible what the opinions of many men are, on the subject of future responsibility; all I will say to this is, that if there be a God above us, he has not placed us on this earth as mere frail machines, distinguished indeed from the brute, by the glorious prerogative of reason, but equally destined to an eternal sleep. There must be after death, rewards for the virtuous and punishments for the wicked; a truth so invincibly supported by the light of reason, and so independent of revelation, that it existed at all times, and among all people,

as one of those original impressions, that present themselves with the idea of a Supreme Being, and form a part of natural religion. Now, it is impossible to conceive any essential difference between good and evil, without the establishment of this truth; or to annex the attributes of justice, wisdom or holiness, to the name of God, if we suppose him an indifferent spectator of crimes, which he must necessarily abhor: admitting all, without distinction, to his glory; placing the murderer by the side of his victim, Cain on the same throne with Abel. But, whatever common reason may say on this point, it must be admitted, at least, that revelation is dreadfully explicit on it; indeed, the various passages that treat of it in the Old and New Testament can scarcely be contemplated, without a shock of the imagination; not a single want of uniformity appears in any, either as to the certainty of future punishments, or the nature and duration of them. Even Jesus Christ himself, who came to converse with man in a ministry of mildness and charity, spoke the same inexorable language, and seems specially intent on

every occasion to cut up the false confidence of sinners by the roots. This therefore is certain, that whatever some infatuated Christians may promise themselves, or however ingenious they may be, in believing on the easiest terms; that is, on the principle of having nothing to dread, the only positive advantage they can derive from this, is, to enjoy the present scene with less disturbance from within. But should the truth lie on the side of sound and unprejudiced reason, and the denunciations of religion absolutely mean, what they literally express; in other words, should such Christians be mistaken on this capital point, surely it is unnecessary to say, that their case is obviously and beyond conception deplorable. All is well as long as the curtain is up, and the puppet-show of life goes on; but when the rapid representation comes to a close, and every hope of a longer respite is precluded, let them believe me, that things will appear in a very different light. A death-bed is a wonderful reasoner; many a proud infidel hath it humbled and refuted, without a word, who but a short time before, would have defied all the ability of man to shake the foundation of his system. Would to

God I could say, that *that* great and awful moment were as often distinguished by the dew of repentance, as by the groan of despair.

Let these reflections give weight to the motive I have just urged, for the protection of these children. The state to which they would be infallibly doomed, without your protection, as infallibly conducts them to the most hardened and incurable guilt. It is the character of deep and habitual impurity, whether in woman or in man, to discard all reflection; to set the observation, the censure, the abhorrence of the world at defiance; to blind, to brutalize, and enslave; to stifle every cry of conscience, extinguish every gleam of reason, defy every bolt of Heaven, and often impel to horrors unknown to every nature but its own. The very Gospel tells you, that its escort is infernal; being invariably accompanied by seven other spirits, scarce inferior to itself; that is, in a word, every consideration divine and human gives way before this vice as the occasion solicits. What is the consequence? You know it. The very efforts you make in the reforma-

tion of abandoned women, prove your sense of it. Nothing, 'tis true, is impossible to God; could his grace descend into hell itself, it would be sufficient to purify it. But, in the ordinary course of his interference, or without the aid of human mercy to raise the fallen, the termination of every such woman, must, in the very nature of things, be horrible and hopeless. Setting all other motives out of the question, this alone ought to render the institution before you immortal. Shut the arch of it my brethren. I know what you are capable of. You see by the notices that called you together, that there is room for fifty more children. I remind you not of the sum required for the support of one hundred and twenty now before you, that would be needless; you have invariably proportioned your bounty on this occasion to the number of objects. I would urge, great as it is, to increase that number. It is impossible for human feelings to witness the calamitous complexion of the present time, without doing so. Without pressing you this day to all that is godlike in charity, I am as responsible as you for the fate of all such creatures. Woe unto

me; were even one excluded from your protection, through the defect of zeal and fervour in my ministry. Complete your work; I know, I repeat what you are capable of. Look back to the period when this institution consisted but of a handful of children; had any man then told you, that you would raise it to what it now is, you would have received the idea as the dream of extravagant enthusiasm. You know not yourselves; every year the merits of the object led you insensibly into greater efforts. Early you let the spirit of the world in your hearts, sink lower and lower, before the superior influence of God and humanity. You now look with astonishment, with pride, with delight on the glorious result; can I doubt, therefore, that you are made of materials to be roused to the highest pitch by an unparalleled crisis; that while your hands and hearts are open out of this place, to meet the shocking exigencies of the poor; while application succeeds application at your doors, and each finds you equally beneficent; can I doubt that you will think of the degree to which such objects as these have increased in the

general disaster? Yes, my brethren, the present solicitations for admittance into this institution, are heart-breaking; they exceed in number and complexion of misery, all precedent, all credibility. To me, as the long-known advocate of it, they are incessant. I see creatures brought before me every hour, that would move bowels of iron; brought by persons who have no human interest in them, but what arises from irresistible compassion. Whom do I address at this moment? Is it the inhabitants of a single parish, or the greatest portion of the wealth, the beneficence, the rank of the Metropolis? Is it possible, that I should lay such circumstances before you without effect? No, my soul tells me you will feel them as you ought. And as separate streams, when drawn to a common centre, become mighty and majestic in their flow, so, under God, shall the redoubled efforts of every individual of this congregation, (in a case so affecting) when united into one mass, present to Him and to the world a new prodigy of Christian charity.

Now to God the Father, &c.

# SERMON IV.

[In Support of the Female Orphan House.]

EPHES. vi. 4.

*Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

IT has long been the most earnest desire of my heart, to see the education of destitute children, in this country, taken up with a spirit, and extended to a degree, proportioned to the idea we must all have formed of its sacredness and importance. It is impossible, I should think, that any man capable of the least reflection, must not be sensible, that, to draw an incorrupted generation from the evil of the day, would to society be an incalculable blessing. Nor can we be ignorant that, if the religion of Christ has any one duty more imperious than another, or common humanity any claim on our hearts, that may be deemed paramount, or even irresistible, it is certainly

this. Very numerous, indeed, have the occasions been on which it has fallen to my lot to enforce these truths: and, though I confess I feel both pride and consolation in contemplating even the slender benefits that have ensued, yet deeply, at the same time, do I regret, that the consequences naturally to be expected from insufficiency of attention to this great concern are, every hour we exist, more and more awfully verified.

I fear, my friends, we need not go far to discover the true source of our torpor and indifference in this cause. Had we more of fervent, genuine religion in our breasts, it would not have been thus long and shamefully neglected; but the truth is, that, with the exception of a chosen few, we have universally departed from the letter and spirit of our calling. We have sunk a religion, destined to elevate man to the sublimest virtue, into a system of vile accommodation with the passions and interests of this world. To the design once formed of extirpating Christianity by violence and persecution, has succeeded one more likely to effect that purpose, because less apparent. The great

enemy of our salvation has not ceased to combat: he has but changed his weapons.

In the days of Christian fervour he went about "like the roaring lion, seeking whom he should devour." In these days of refinement and effeminacy, like the timid serpent, he creeps, and gives death under flowers. Violence is abandoned as a bad system: for, contrary to his hopes, it only tended to people the world with proselytes, and heaven with martyrs. To seduction and insinuation he has therefore had recourse: crimes are stripped of their natural turpitude; they are embellished and adorned; our reason is betrayed, our senses are fascinated; he has left us the external exercise of our religion, but has raised altar against altar.

What is the consequence? Why, his triumph is nearly complete; the mystery of iniquity has nearly absorbed the mystery of holiness! What the cruelty of tyrants could not accomplish, is rapidly accomplishing by softer means. Never did the earth contain such a number of Christians as at

this hour; never did it contain so little Christianity.

Surely then I may be allowed to say, that it is not under such circumstances, great and effectual means will ever be applied to regenerate the morals of our unhappy people. It is not from such passions as too generally enslave us, those scourges of human society, ambition and selfishness; not from a system of vanity, the most excessive and puerile; not from luxury, the most unmanly and sensual; not from pride the most unfounded and overbearing; not from impurity, as cruel in its pursuits as destructive in its consequences; not from pampered idleness, basking in the sunshine of prosperity, and oppressing that soil which calls aloud for active and useful citizens; not from religion, upheld, as a learned Prelate has recently and justly remarked, in state proclamation, while excluded from practice; not from fashionable infidelity, reviling what it is incompetent to refute; not from the very ministry of God, teeming with intruders, a trust that at all times, but more especially in the present,

requires almost the zeal and labour of an apostle.

Surely, I repeat it, it is not from such a gulph of degeneracy, the divine flame of charity will ever arise to compass mighty things in the cause of Heaven and fellow-creatures! Familiarized with iniquity ourselves, how shall the torrent of it that flows in the subordinate classes of life pierce and afflict our hearts? Prodigal of our own souls, how shall we burn for the salvation of others?

No; it is a forlorn hope! The true christian alone is heir to the zeal of his divine Master; and were it necessary to lay down his very life to prevent but a single crime, or save a single soul, the ardent love of God and his neighbour would readily determine him to the sacrifice.

Happy, thrice happy, would the state of our society be at this day, had the orders I now address possessed but a spark of that heavenly spirit! What peace, what harmony, what order, what love and union,

what submission to authority would be diffused over the face of this unhappy nation? each resigned to the station which Providence had assigned him; exact to fulfil its obligations, and proposing nothing to himself but with God at its head, disposing the whole by his wisdom, animating it with his spirit, enriching it by his liberality, sanctifying it by his grace, supporting it by his power.

At the view of such a blessed scene, who would not feel himself inclined to exclaim, like Baalam before the camp of the Israelites, "How goodly are thy tents, oh Jacob, and thy tabernacles, oh Israel!" This is what true religion, universally known and practised, would have produced. This is the effect it wrought on its early disciples, that singular and extraordinary description of men, which arose all at once in the very bosom of paganism. The friends of peace, who obeyed, and even prayed for the prosperity of their persecutors, and were as much distinguished for the love of one another, as for the unequalled purity of their lives. There were

riches and poverty among them, and yet they were neither rich or poor. Love alone equalized every thing. They had but one universal will, the will of God; one spirit, the spirit of God; one interest, the interest of all. Divine operation of religion! what are now thy substitutes? Mutual repulsion among Christians: private interest almost exclusively pursued: disguised enmities: secret envies: perfidies in friendship: antipathies in marriage: discord in families: animosities of party: jealousies of profession: treasons against the state: a general fermentation: hatred rankling within, the sword unsheathed without; a nation, forced in its own preservation, to arm chiefly against its own unnatural children: citizens still kept together by their wants, divided by their passions: exterior courtesy, no sentiment of affection: protestations that cost nothing, no real services: an assemblage of men, no society! A melancholy picture this, no doubt, but with you it lies to say whether it be imaginary or not.

Perhaps you may allow me to shew, in

a short digression, that if our insensibility to the pressing claims of the rising generation proceed from our corruption, that corruption has its chief source in the very education we have received. Yes, my friends, if the people are victims, because absolutely untutored, so are we, because the stress in our education is not laid where it ought. Nothing indeed is usually omitted that can fit the youth of both sexes to play a part in the world; the one to climb by their talents; the other to triumph in the wretched circles of vanity by the grace of manners. But a deep and indelible sense of their duty to God, a fixed horror of vice, and noble disdain of folly, where is the parent who thinks sufficiently of inspiring? But admitting that some pains are employed on this head, of what use can they be, if, from their infrequency and languor, they are considered by children rather as a debt paid to custom and routine, than a thing of serious and awful necessity? How shall the superficial tincture of religion and virtue hold against the rising passions of youth? No; when the season of their hurricane comes, what lies merely on the sur-

face of the heart, will be torn up and swept away like chaff before the winds. No; if impressions penetrate not to the very bottom of the soul, are not united with our very being, never shall man resist, for any time, the power of the enemy within, or of the world without. The evidence of this is on every side of us. Besides, of what use are instructions, even assiduously and fervently conveyed, without unceasing vigilance to cut off all danger of corruption? We know, that to relax in this particular but a moment, is sometimes fatal. Remember that our Saviour scarce slumbered when the tempest arose to overwhelm the vessel that bore his disciples. Remember the counsel of the Wise Man, "Never lose sight of what you value, and are in danger of losing." Remember the fate of the unfortunate Dinah, "who went out without being accompanied." What tears the compliance of a moment cost the afflicted Jacob, and what torrents of blood were shed to repair the injury he received. Indefatigable attention then to this point is indispensably necessary. But who, at this day, make it a rule never to admit their children

to improper intercourse? How often, on the contrary, are they permitted to pass warm from the lesson of piety and virtue into circles of pleasure and dissipation, where every thing they hear and see tends to enervate the mind and corrupt the heart? How often are innocent girls matronized, as the phrase is, by women of characters worse than dubious, as if the rank and distinction of such conductors could be considered as a shield of protection against the contagion of notorious freedom and lubricity of manners? It will easily, I believe, be admitted, that the world possesses the secret of making perfect proselytes to vice without giving any direct lessons on the subject; and that many a youth may be thought a saint at home, who is known among his associates as a libertine of the very first hope, and who secretly laughs at the imbecility of his parents, who could rely on theory, and overlook the force of example.

I cannot omit reprobating on this head the too familiar intercourse to which children are admitted with menials. For to

say nothing of the coarse and grovelling habits they must consequently imbibe, nothing of those arrogant, overbearing and supercilious notions that are necessarily contracted from being deified and fawned on; the great danger is, that as servants, in general, have not been blessed with the advantage of education, and are under no sort of restraint, but what arises merely from the dread of dismission, they will often utter language and betray principles that sink deep into the recollection of young minds, and naturally produce the most deplorable effects. Nay, we need not be told that there are persons in this order of life who will secretly flatter the passions of rising youth, and even found their hopes of a future independence, on a ready administration to the vilest appetites. Many a man, I fear, in a very different class from that I speak of, owes his advancement and elevation in this world, not certainly to so infernal a ministry, but to that easy and conniving kind of rule which a youth may experience in a state of pupillage.

Besides the points I have insisted on I would remind parents, how infinite almost are the qualities necessary to succeed in seducing, I may say, the understanding and the hearts of children, to the knowledge and love of virtue. There should be tenderness to engage their affection, bounty to attract their confidence, gravity to draw their respect, authority to hold them in submission, affability to render their dependence amiable, severity that has nothing revolting, compliance that has nothing base, mildness that knows how to forgive, firmness that can punish and repress, wisdom that can sometimes dissemble and seem ignorant of what it sees, deep attention to discover their ruling passions; attention, if possible, still more deep, to counteract them, and yet conceal the discovery; in fine, almost as many forms of proceeding as there are children to educate; for as every plant requires not the same kind of culture, so, what would be useful in forming the mind of one child, would be dangerous, or even fatal, in forming that of another. But where are the parents who would know themselves in this represen-

tation? Sensible they may be of its justice, but such a tax on their time and attention, is found incompatible with their ordinary pursuits; incompatible with a life of effeminacy and indolence; of business or intrigue; of play or pleasure; of tranquillity and repose. What is the consequence? Why in the little they may do to forward this great work they fall into a thousand errors; being directed more by humour and impatience, than by sound and serious reflection.

Some are even brutal to excess in the treatment of their children; converting an occupation in which tenderness and insinuation should take the lead, into a system of downright persecution. When called on to reprehend, they do it in words of wormwood and gall. When forced to approve, their manner is cold and discouraging; they neither do justice to the virtues, or can forgive the weakness of youth; no entreaties can mollify, no tears disarm them; their families are the region of eternal tempests, where nothing is heard but the moans of the oppressed, and the bellow of

the tyrant. The unhappy victims may be truly said to feed on the bread of tears and wretchedness. They consider their parents as the cruellest enemies; loathe and detest their precepts; and never can be induced to consider that virtue amiable, which is recommended in accents of terror, and enforced by unsupportable authority.

Hence the most ardent longing for emancipation; hence do the youth of one sex plunge early and openly into vice, more perhaps from rage against their persecutors, than from natural inclination; and those of the other, often at the tenderest age, fly into the arms of the first man who offers to be their deliverer, form unequal and inglorious matches, or become victims of a far more deplorable misfortune.

There may be, however, and often is, a defect in the conduct of parents, of a nature the very opposite; namely, that of loving their children too much, or more properly speaking, to their ruin. "He that spareth the rod," saith the Wise Man, "hateth his son, but he that loveth him



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chasteneth him betimes." Dreadful are the consequences of that blind affection which will see no fault in a child, and suffer all the untoward propensities of his nature to grow up and strengthen from the fear of afflicting them by controul.

It is not uncommon to see such spoiled children, if I may use a received expression, treating even their too indulgent parents with habitual insolence and disrespect; starting into ungovernable sallies of rage at the slightest opposition to their will, become absolute pests, not only in their own families, but wherever they are admitted; and betraying, on all occasions, such sinister propensities as should make parents tremble for their future happiness.

But what must we think when, as they advance in years, their vices and irregularities are overlooked from the same principle? When parents are found to treat the most notorious profligacy with unabated familiarity and affection; nay frequently listen with smiles and complacency to the history of the most scandalous freaks and excesses.

Great God, with what justice shall such children, at the close of an unhappy life, descending perhaps into the grave covered with abominations, and despairing of futurity, pour burning curses on the head of those who might have prevented so dreadful a catastrophe, by loving them as they ought to have loved!

My friends, we are invested by nature and religion with a kind of sovereign authority over our children: let us use it with tender reluctance on all occasions; but when necessary, with inflexible justice. Nothing should stand between us and the most sacred duty.

It was the oblivion of it that drew down the vengeance of God on the head of Heli and his whole family: they perished in one hour! Nor can we forget that David, by overlooking, from mistaken affection, the first crime of his son Absolom, soon found him an usurper, and wanting nothing but the occasion to become a parricide!—Another capital error, to which parents are liable, is, not so much the feeling, as the

betraying, a greater regard for one child than another. Did such a distinction arise from a difference in their deserts it might be justified, as going to promote a spirit of emulation in good conduct; but founded, generally, on pure caprice, or some quality merely extrinsic, and often too in favor of the most unworthy, I need not observe that it is as opposite to reason, as it is irreconcilable with the principles of religion and the impartiality of nature; besides that it invariably goes to excite the worst passions in the breasts of children. For they who are forced into the shade, delivered over to the most mortifying neglect, to make room for the monopoly of one, will feel it to the quick; will burn with implacable hatred and resentment against the favourite, and be impelled to despise, if not detest the parent who is capable of such manifest injustice. Nor is it out of experience to say, that a strong and bitter recollection of that injustice, is sometimes preserved far beyond the season of youth, and that parents have looked in vain for that filial affection and duty which they once took no pains to foment, or rather laboured directly to extinguish.

The last obstacle to success in this cause, and one absolutely insuperable, is the want of edifying deportment in parents. Where this is wanting all other efforts are but solemn mockery. It is the strangest abuse of common sense, to suppose that children will retain lessons of religion and virtue, whatever solemnity may be used to infix them, when they have hourly before their eyes so great a contradiction, as a dissipated or vicious example in the very person of their instructor. St. Paul has observed, in his letter to Timothy, that a minister of religion should be exempt from reproach; and for this obvious reason, because no circumstance is more necessary to give effect to ministry. But if we suppose his life to recoil from investigation, or in other words, his instructions and reprehensions to blush for his morals, what part does he perform but a pompous farce, which in reality has nothing serious save the deep and affecting scandal it entails on religion. With what grace, admonishes the same Apostle, shall he inveigh against adulteries, fornication, blasphemy, irreligion, or any other crime, if every word he utters bear directly against

himself? Or admitting that he takes care to conceal from the knowledge of the world, the whole extent of his unworthiness, from what source is he to draw that force and fervour so necessary to impress his hearers, if it be true that the heart alone can speak to the heart? The word of God comes then degraded and weakened from his lips; and not this only, but he renders it suspected, and consequently unfruitful, in the mouth of better men. For the world, to justify itself, will affect to apprehend the same vices in both, and pronounce with little difficulty the whole function to be mere art and imposture; nor has it a more usual appeal, than the conduct of those who presume to condemn it. This is the eternal language of all libertines, and the salt of all their satire against religion and its ministers.

In exactly the same situation, or if possible more unproductive of fruit, is the parent who takes no care to edify his children. A debauched father may indeed compose a serious face, and speak to his son in sentences on his duty to God, and the debasement of being mastered by his pas-

sions; or a woman of the world may read, for mere variety, a lecture to her daughter on the advantages of modesty, reserve and retirement; but what effect will either produce, but a manifest impatience of, or a suppressed contempt for such barefaced effrontery! But again, with what indignation shall we think of those who use no effort whatsoever, to weaken the effect of their conduct, but train up their children openly and directly to vice and irreligion; sporting in their presence with the most sacred things, holding language avowedly or transparently obscene, pressing on their hearts a most irritable sense of the slightest injury or insult, recommending, nay, consecrating the sanguinary rules of modern honour, implanting an ardent thirst of riches and exclusive ambition of human glory; just as if their object was to spare the devil, the world, and the flesh the trouble of seducing them at a future day; as if, not content with being personally impious and abandoned, they would perpetuate their crimes and impiety in a guilty race; and, from the bottom of the tomb, continue to insult heaven and earth in the persons of their children, when

no longer in a capacity of doing so themselves. If such parents tremble not at the thoughts of thy vengeance, Oh, just and righteous God! what minister of iniquity can have cause to tremble! Let those who are parents among us reflect on this awful and too intelligible sentence, "their blood will I require at your hands." Their blood! If such be the language of God himself, dreadfully forewarning them, better, far better, they had never been born, than do the work of Satan in the very bosom of their families; and, contrary to the loud cry of nature, deliberately plunge their children into an abyss temporal and everlasting.

Let mercy, boundless mercy, at length arise to that friendless generation which I plead for, who have none but us to help them in the ways of eternal life. Never, during a ministry of eleven years, have I omitted, in a single instance, to speak of that hour that might woefully enlighten you on the consequences of slumbering in this cause.

What now have I to tell you, but that Heaven would still seem to leave you the

alternative of adopting between its judgments and your duty. Resolve then, and execute instantly, "most instantly;" let us cut off, as far as your power extends, the supply of abomination through the land. Separate the unpolluted child from the unexampled contagion of the day; and resist the evil that already exists, by the increasing energy of every Christian virtue. Let peace, order, and regular government have your steadiest countenance; they are fundamental points of our holy religion, and fountains of all social happiness. Be not deluded by the specious cry of bondage and oppression issuing from the den of the murderer and anarchist, and industriously kept up by inflammatory publications, and too active incendiaries; but oppose, by every nerve of your strength, a most outrageous system of insubordination and crimes, that bids fair to have no rival but one, in the history of the whole civilized world! Away with that unworthy spirit, too common I fear among us, which, from mere motives of personal animosity to ruling powers, would even favour the cause of treason and disaffection. Oh! how much has the man who

rises not at this great crisis above grovelling considerations; who sinks not the little feeling of disappointed hopes or unrequited services, in a noble, manly, and generous zeal for the salvation of his country; how much, I say, has he to learn on the nature of true glory! Let the atrocious scenes that have passed in another nation, in such rapid and improving succession, and which will stain, to the latest period of time, the annals of human nature; let them teach you to value as you ought the constitution with which Providence has blessed you: for be assured, whatever its infirmities may be, (and from what system, administered by man, can infirmity be altogether inseparable,) we should never exchange it for a better, or exchange it without the worst of calamities, without standing on the wreck of all order, and a foundation of blood. You are deceived, if you imagine that the discontented orders of your community, in whose hearts the fear of God hath never been implanted, have any other object in their rage for innovation, but to level every thing with the dust; confound all rights, no matter by what means, and riot in the ruin. The samples

of this, that come daily before you, should warn you of what you ought to expect in the tremendous hour of national convulsion. I know that the few sentiments I have just uttered are not, perhaps, exactly such as prudence would have directed, seeing the precipitate, inexorable, and remorseless passions that are abroad; but, thank God, my sense of duty is superior to my fears; and that I have promoted the true interest of the people, too faithfully and too long, to tarnish the zeal I still and ever will feel for them, by a shameful silence on their present phrenzy and excesses. May that great Being, who hath said through the voice of his prophet, "that righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is the reproach of any people," may he give us to see a generation arise whose virtues shall drown the recollection of this unhappy day; increase the peace, glory, and prosperity of this country; and, individually, their own happiness here and for ever!

I now turn to these orphans. Better we had never opened a single asylum for the protection of innocence, than inhumanly

dash the blessing from its lips, and cast it out again to a world of misery and vice. God forbid that I should say, that you met not the very thought with abhorrence! But give me leave to ask, what is to become of public charities if mercy falls short? What resource have they in such a case, but to lighten a burden they are unequal to support? Or, who will tell me, that such another shock as this great institution experienced the preceding year, must not sink it for ever?

What, my friends, shall the mercy we once exhibited, serve but to record our shame and inconsistency? Shall we have taken up the most affecting object with fervor, nay, with enthusiasm, and like children surfeited with a bauble, rapidly consign it to oblivion and neglect? Is this religion, or is it humanity? How truly, indeed, does the prophet describe us, when he speaks of those hearts of wax, that are easily moved, but with difficulty fixed; or rather, whose distinguishing mark is eternal versatility! How terrible is the sentence which Jesus Christ has pronounced against them,

"No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." He does not say, that he loses his right to the kingdom of God, or is in danger of being excluded from it; but that the particular and inherent turn of his mind and heart is absolutely incompatible with salvation. And the reason is clear; because religion necessarily supposes a character capable of resolving, and adhering to its resolves; because, virtue is invariably represented in the Holy Writings under the idea of Wisdom; and the just, under that of a rational and prudent man, who judges soundly of things, takes solid measures, and is superior to the miserable weakness of commencing a building, but to leave it imperfect; or in other words, a disgraceful monument of human levity and inconstancy.

Merciful God! Will you not recollect the faith you so solemnly pledged to those unhappy infants? Will you not recollect how dear they once were to you? how cherished, how patronized by all the virtue, wealth, and rank of the nation? What can have

happened to estrange you from them, if it be not a crime to do honour to your protection, and present a spectacle at this moment, as glorious to religion as it is affecting to the heart?

Will you not recollect, that their case is peculiar? that of all destitute objects, they are eminently the most so? fatherless, motherless? without one being, perhaps, on the wide earth to shed a tear for their misfortunes, should it be theirs to find themselves abandoned? Will you hear that sacred voice, which has told you, that, "to visit the fatherless in their affliction, is pure and undefiled religion?"

Are you yet to learn, that the tender commiseration of God was from the beginning, peculiarly directed to this hapless and unprotected race; that the Israelites were expressly commanded to consider orphans in the immediate relation of brothers; even to shelter them under their roof, and feed them at their board? No, never! never can you deliberately cast them from you, while there is a spark of

religion or humanity remaining in your souls!

Their sex too! On this consideration I shall not dwell. I believe there is not a single calamity, of whatever nature it may be, to which unprotected females are liable, or a single blessing, resulting either to the community, or themselves, from their protection, that I have not, on various occasions, laid before you to the utmost of my ability.

You have, at this moment, in this city, three establishments for the reformation of abandoned women; and if it be mercy, nay, superior mercy, to favour that reformation, I leave it to your own hearts, candidly and impartially to pronounce on that feeling, which, instead of meeting a public and enormous evil, where it ought chiefly to be met; instead of opening the gates of an institution like this, would, on the contrary, spurn unpolluted and imploring creatures from our very knees, and plunge them into a gulph, which too many of you, to my certain knowledge, consider as hopeless.

Fair as the occasion may be, in this place, of interesting your passions, I will not embrace it; I would leave you the merit of a free and deliberate sacrifice to your duty. I would not have you to do at this hour, what you would not do at the next, and the next. If sober and dispassionate reflection produce not the effect; I desire then, give the last blow to this godlike charity. You have shaken it already, let it sink; let its inmates go forth into a world of iniquity and woe; they are not yet without hope. They have still the great Father of the fatherless to supply your place; to shield them from the approaches of guilt, and feed them as he feeds the raven of the air.

Alas, my friends, I had forgot that his ways are inscrutable! Who can answer for his special interference even here? They may fall, as thousands of deserted creatures have fallen before them. Those forms you now behold, may be blasted with loathsomeness and disease; that spotless purity be transformed into shameless and incorrigible vice; those humble comforts into

nakedness and famine, and all the varieties of human wretchedness.

Candidates at this moment for a career of virtue and blessed futurity, they may live but to curse the hour they were born, through time and eternity. Such is the doom that too possibly may await them; can you think of consigning them to it? Can you look up without trembling, or without a tear?

I need press you no more. I, at least, shall be guiltless of their blood. Deal the point with your God! you are before him! he sees you! he will judge you this hour, as he will judge you for ever! I have the authority of his word for saying it; for saying, that vain is our hope of mercy, should we appear before his awful tribunal chargeable with the perdition of any human creature.

Oh, my friends, I recollect days when the cause I now plead could stir up mercy in glorious profusion; but like a tale too often told, we hear the persevering appeal

to us with increased indifference. The attraction of novelty is gone. The world has resumed its ascendency. We resemble the unsteady Israelites, who bowed and adored when they first saw that resplendent column of fire that led them by night through an untrodden wilderness, but relapsed again into their former indocility, as soon as the august spectacle became familiar to their eyes.

I trust, however, that this day will evince that we can be ourselves again. Little passions may have their influence; they sometimes steal on the noblest dispositions; but where a principle of true greatness exists, a moment of crisis will infallibly call it forth. And from the experience I have had of you, I do boldly affirm, that you were not born to be moderately affected, when the cry of one hundred and twenty perishing infants resounds in your ears.

I leave you then to be directed by that spirit, which I trust is awakened in you. You know the too critical situation in which

they stand. I have already I believe stated, that the result of their last appeal to the public was unequal to the support of one-fourth of their number. I need not state that the result of the present appeal must be every way worthy of you, or their destiny is decided. What that destiny would be I have faintly sketched. Of these most wretched creatures, my friends, I had the happiness of being the first advocate. May Heaven avert, that I should know the inexpressible misery of being their last!

You ask, and the question is natural enough, how, with a fund so far short, they could have been kept together to this day? I am not at liberty to inform you. I wish, for the honour of human nature, I was. You would then discover what astonishing sacrifices souls truly christian and compassionate are capable of: so ardent is the interest I take in this cause, that I am at a loss to determine what sentence shall be my last.

Oh, my friends, Did any of you stand this moment in my place, and plead for

children whom his own eyes had seen taken from misery the most appalling, whose present happiness and progress in every virtue he was the frequent witness of, whom the force of habit taught him tenderly to love, and who looked up to him as a protector and a father; yes, he might be tempted, as I am, to encroach on the patience and indulgence of his hearers.

But I have done. Most fervently do I implore you not to suffer this first of institutions to fall: save it by one noble exertion. You live in times when splendid examples, in support of religion and morals, are the supreme duty of every Christian and citizen. You live in times when the human character, I may say so, is universally on the stretch; and, according to its bent, will naturally be distinguished by great virtues or great crimes.

Should any persons have come hither unacquainted with the pressing necessity of the case, and therefore, possibly, unprovided to meet it to the extent of their wishes, Go, I would say to them, and instantly

apply the remedy; Go into the vestry of this church and put down your names for that increase of mercy which God has inspired, and carry home the precious consolation of having formed an immediate opportunity of doing what your feelings and a sense of duty suggest.

Should any others know the practice of contributing on these occasions to a certain amount, and no more; to them likewise I say, Is it possible that you can be thus masters of your hearts? Has not true sensibility its sallies and excesses? And are there not calls so imperious, miseries so touching, that to be directed by a given rule in their relief, would seem beyond the power of the least impressible natures?

To all do I say, be merciful; Oh, be merciful according to the measure of the occasion; act at this instant as you would act were you certain that this very night your soul would be demanded of you. Act as you would act did the Saviour of these orphans stand visible by their side, reminding you that his blood was shed for

them as well as you, and implore you with his own lips not to render it unfruitful. Can I dismiss a Christian assembly with a consideration more awful!

And now to God the Father, &c.

# SERMON V.

[For the Female Orphan House.]

ST. JOHN xiii. 34.

*A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another.*

WHATEVER difficulty I may feel in attempting to vary the ground of appeal to the charity of Christians, it is more than compensated by the hope of being useful to the cause of society and my fellow creatures. Warmed by this consideration, I lose the recollection of a worn-out subject, and come before you with the confidence of a man, who knows "the race is not always to the swift, or the battle to the strong," but that God can make use of the weakest instruments, to execute his designs of grace and mercy.

Nor am I a little supported by the reflection, that the manifestly increased re-

spect for religion and its duties, goes to supersede, on these occasions, the necessity of laborious efforts to engage the passions. Before the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, the world was *a stranger to* the principle of true benevolence. *Philosophy* gave pompous precepts that astonished the reason, but reached not the heart. Amidst the refined and ostentatious lessons of the sage to explain the secret of human happiness, man still remained a prey to himself, that is, to his worst passions. The immense diversity of superstitious manners and interests, had nearly diversified the same nature, and left little to prove the similarity, but the common stamp of humanity.

To peruse the records of these periods, one would think, that men owed their being to different and irreconcileable creators, who had placed them here below, to glut their animosities by all the various horrors of endless war and extermination. All the crimes and ravages of ambition found an apology in the pursuit of glory; and the bitterest indulgence of private vengeance was coloured with the name of public justice; one

successful villain or another became the hero of the day; and millions of human victims often paved the way for the parade of a triumph, and short-lived possession of pre-eminence and power.

Such was, in a few words, the afflicted state of the world, when a divine and benevolent doctrine presented a remedy to its misfortunes. Alas, too few and rapid were the golden days of its influence! It would be foreign from my purpose, it would be a melancholy task, as well as too extensive for a discourse of this nature, to trace the early and various departure of Christian nations from the great law of peace, love, and union between men; and equally so, to mark all the passions that infringe on virtues that should flow from that godlike precept, in the private intercourse of life. I shall, therefore, confine myself to the influence it ought to have, in two points that nearly concern us; first, in inspiring a feeling of true brotherhood between Christians of every religious denomination. And secondly, in peculiarly disposing our hearts to the exercise of mercy.

I can conceive, my brethren, that Christians, even in the face of an imperious obligation to love one another, may yet sometimes be unhappily divided by their interests or passions; that a sense of injury or insult may supersede the nobler feeling of forbearance; that the spirit of selfishness may steel the heart against the claims of humanity; or the stings of envy lead to the baseness that would undervalue the merit, or to the calumny that would ruin the reputation of another.

But of all sources of disunion between Christians, it appears incomprehensible to reason, as it certainly is afflicting to the heart of benevolence, that such an effect should ensue, and have ensued in all its bitterness, from mere difference of opinion, on points of doctrine as unconnected with the fundamentals of that religion, as the variety of speculations that have taken place, on the moral and natural evils of the world, are with the existence of a God.

I open the Gospel; I see every thing to condemn, nothing to sanction this unhappy

perversion of its spirit. I see living Benevolence uniting the Jew and the Gentile, annihilating the distinction of Greek and Barbarian, and delivering up to the execration of the head and the heart, every prejudice and passion that stood in the way of general union and felicity.

I see it pointing out to man the greatness of his origin and distinction; the dangers of worldly prosperity, the utility of afflictions, the merit of submission and patience, the necessity of rigorous privations; and thus kindling in his soul the glorious ambition of an imperishable good. I see it uniting him to his fellow, by one common worship and one common hope; and moulding all the people of the earth into the nature of one family, and that family into one heart.

I see all this; but not a trace of countenance to intemperate and uncharitable zeal, even in support of essential truths; witness the instant and indignant rebuke of that sanguinary and intolerant spirit in which all the Jew appeared, manifested by him,

against the wretched inhabitants of an unbelieving village; witness his tender and indefatigable effort to remove the prejudice of the woman of Samaria: "How is it that thou who art a Jew, can ask drink from me who am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." How he accommodated himself to that prejudice, the better to remove it; spoke the very language of her errors, in search of an occasion to insinuate truth; and patiently kept back the exposition of her unhappy state, lest her heart should revolt against the hand that was to heal her.

Through the whole course of his ministry, to require a belief in the sublime and abstruse principles of the religion he came to establish, was a secondary object; to propagate a benevolent spirit, and mend the human heart, was evidently the first. If Jesus Christ was any thing, he was eminently the preacher of morality. The entire of that truly divine discourse which he delivered on the mount, went exclusively to that end; there was nothing in it of a speculative nature; nothing that was not immediately

designed to soften and purify the conduct, in every relation of life. "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God." "Blessed the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." "Blessed the meek, the poor in spirit, pure of heart; blessed all who hunger and thirst after righteousness." It is the simple, but fervent eulogy of every relative virtue, and every bond of blissful intercourse between men.

His Apostles inherited his wisdom and his heart. We know the marked solicitude of St. Paul to remove the seed of disunion, expressed in his letters to Titus. "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed be careful to maintain good works, for these are profitable; but avoid foolish questions and contentions about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain." And, I am sure, whoever has a soul capable of being impressed by language, must conceive what true Christian benevolence is, from a passage of the same Apostle, which, though familiar to every ear, and therefore less liable to strike, yet equals perhaps, in point

of strength, any thing recorded in the annals of human eloquence.

" Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have the gift of prophecy, and understanding of all mystery; and have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and give my very body to be burned, and yet with all these have not charity, I am nothing more than a piece of sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." That is, in plain words, whoever is a stranger to the ardent love of his neighbour and of mankind, is still ignorant of every thing purely evangelical, and for what end it was that Christ lived and died.

And when St. John, the peculiarly beloved Apostle of Christ, was reproached by his disciples for constantly preaching on this subject, or bringing round, at least, his instructions to this one object, let us recollect his memorable answer, " Because it is the precept of our Master, and whoever keeps it, he shall be found perfect before God."

From all therefore that has been said, it appears, how perfective of human nature and human happiness, that system is, which, even in the face of an enemy, observes a brother; which is one continued line of exhortation to unbounded benevolence, and whose illustrious founder has declared, that its professors should be known and immortalized by that one sentiment alone; thus pointing out the means of beginning our heaven on earth, and antedating here below the joys and tranquillity of the blessed.

And yet it is horrible to reflect, that instead of answering that happy end, it has, by a strange and unnatural perversion of things, become itself, from the day on which Constantine ascended the throne of the Cæsars, to that in which we live and breathe, the very source of implacable jars, and led to scenes at which every nerve of humanity trembles; and this merely to vindicate and do honour (an imagination which the devil alone could suggest), to particular tenets of faith. Yes! Christians retaliating on each other by turns,

every human calamity, pillaging towns, depopulating happy and fertile countries, massacring, with unsparing rage, even the helpless infant, and the tender sex, without any motive, without any spur, but miserable and furious attachment to speculations undeterminable without a new revelation from heaven, and yet which each were blind enough to conceive as essential constituents of Christianity!

I know nothing essential to the belief of a Christian but this, belief in the being, attributes, government, trinity and unity, of God; that he is the author of all nature, and fountain of all our blessings; that his providence is universal as the light; that we are responsible creatures, destined for a state of felicity or misery everlasting; that righteousness of course is indispensible to our salvation; that the Holy Spirit assists our infirmity; that Jesus Christ is our redeemer, mediator, advocate and judge; and that under the title of his infinite merits we are all pursuing the same destination and felicity.

Every other point is, comparatively, frivolous and indifferent, and which-ever we embrace or reject, according to the result of our inquiry and judgment, can neither add to or diminish our right to the name of a Christian, or any way affect our pretensions to the favour of God. And, what good has ever arisen from annexing imaginary importance to any thing in which all Christians are not agreed? We are sure of the bloody and proscribing spirit which such a libel on right reason and true religion has engendered, sure of the horrid and unparalleled evils it has produced! But where are the benefits? Has it cast one feather into the scale of human virtue or human happiness? Has it been found that any one denomination of Christians has universally carried the palm of uprightness and pure morality? Is it not clear that there are, and ever have been, examples of eminent worth and eminent depravity in all?

Perish then the principle that opposes the natural tendency of man to man, and has deluged the old and the new world

with crimes and calamities. I draw a veil over our own experience; it is, alas, too easy at this day, even with the most benevolent intention of healing and doing good, to incur the charge of the very principle I have now deplored and condemned. For myself I will say, for you my hearers, for the truly enlightened of every sect, that I trust there lives not one spark of it in any corner of our souls; and that there is not any human creature in the wide lap of earth in whose face we should not read the clearest title to our best love and service.

Still never, I do not hesitate to assert it, did the day exist, when, for the honour of a divine religion, and the welfare of human creatures, it was more necessary to unite in tearing up the old and baneful root of bitterness, and impressing deeply on the minds of the ignorant, the great command of love, peace, and union, between all Christians and all men.

Happy had it been for this small, but charming portion of the earth, had care been early taken, to direct the attention of

a (naturally) open, generous, and warm-hearted race, as the people of this country have been justly and emphatically called, not to the miserable jealousy of matters that are the discovery of man, but to the great social duties of that system which is the revelation of God.

A good and benevolent life is the sum and substance of it; and the only right preparation we can make for an happy entrance into that blessed region, where sin and sorrow, strife and discord shall never enter. And much more useful and glorious would I deem it to utter even one clumsy sentence in support of that vital object, than be the author of all the musty folios the groaning shelves of polemic divinity ever bore.

"A new command I give unto you that you love one another."

I have endeavoured to shew the influence this divine precept ought to have in conciliating Christians of every religious communion. It remains to consider it as the

most powerful incentive to mercy. To commiserate and relieve the miserable is the law of reason and nature, as well as the result of divine and benevolent doctrine. Man, formed to the resemblance of the deity, was originally placed on this earth to enjoy and divide its benefits with equal wants and equal rights to the same resources.

The universe was a vast temple, in which the great author of nature struck the eyes of his creatures under the symbols of various beneficence. A sense of gratitude erected altars, but the blood of animals stained them not; the offering was more noble, that of virtuous and acknowledging hearts.

But this happy state was soon overturned by the violence of human passions. It was incompatible with that growing propensity to injustice, that followed the disorder of our nature; the wants of imagination gave rise to immensity of desires. Force, goaded, and instructed by selfishness, produced the crime of usurpation; the feeble were oppressed, and a large portion of mankind handed

over to the care of a just and merciful providence. Here have we, my brethren, if I may use the expression, the ancestry of human misery, and the foundation of that principle which the world knows by the name of Humanity; a principle resting on the eternal law of reason and justice.

I need not observe to you, that horrible would be the perversion of both, were men capable of supposing, that all the benefits of this earth became the lot of the happier few, without an inviolable obligation of supplying to the utmost this inscrutable distinction. That the luxury of a single man should absorb the subsistence of thousands, all the productions of nature and industry be collected to pamper sensuality, and rock the luxurious drone, while multitudes, of a class the most useful and laborious, should know the God of Justice only by the intolerable pressure of his hand. We are, therefore, clearly appointed by him to explain the mystery of his ways to man, by becoming ministers of consolation to the less favoured, rendering our abundance

a sure and unerring resource to their necessities; and thus diminishing, as far as in us lies, the immeasurable distance between misery and affluence which otherwise too naturally begets in the neglected sufferers murmurs against heaven, and rage against the prosperous.

This is what reason alone points out, and for which we should be strictly responsible, though Christianity were a fable, or its founder an impostor. Happy is it that God has implanted, in aid of this duty of justice, a feeling of commiseration, which no prejudice or passion, not even the idolatry of avarice can totally eradicate from the soul, and whose invincible influence on all rational nature, is evinced, not only by the universality of its practice, but the certain remorse, as well as odium and detestation, which the striking neglect of it never fails to excite.

Thank God we live in a nation proverbially merciful; and where those who have been blessed with extraordinary means know how to vindicate, by the constancy,

variety, and superior grandeur of their benefits, the impartial justice of Providence to his creatures, as the great luminary of day, in the majesty and splendor of its march, proclaims to every living eye, the glory of its author. Peace be on their heads, their reward is not here, save the blessing of many a tongue, and the exquisite sensation of approving conscience.

But, besides the obligation of justice in this case, a benevolent religion presents to us, in every child of affliction, a brother, redeemed with the same blood, and destined to the same felicity. It looks not at those arbitrary distinctions which prejudice has formed between men; the august character of Christian levels every wall of separation which vanity has erected. "You are all," says St. Paul to the Galatians, "one by faith in Christ Jesus: There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." We see the blessed effect of this Christian brotherhood, in the first society of Christians: total detachment from all perishable things. The earth became the

image of heaven, the plaintive tone of indigence no longer heard, the felicity of every individual inseparable from the felicity of the whole; and by this admirable concert of parts, an august body formed, in which all men, however unequal in rank, were rendered equal by their moderation, great by their disinterestedness, and happy by their beneficence.

Wonderful are the accounts transmitted to us in history on this subject. For several years the benevolence of Christians rose so far above the level of ordinary conception, that the Pagans attributed it to some secret spell or charm, that had the power of inspiring violent and irresistible attachment.

"It is inconceivable," says one writer, "what unremitting diligence those Christians use to succour one another, since they have abandoned the true religion and adore a crucified man: their teachers have acquired the wonderful art of persuading them that they are all brothers, insomuch that the whole of their possessions are given up

for the general welfare." We have likewise the testimony of the greatest enemy the Christian faith ever had, and certainly the most subtile and dangerous; for he did not, like his predecessors on the throne, carry fire and sword among its abettors, since experience had proved that such attempts were fruitless, and only served to give new vigour and increase to the cause; but as the love and charity of the Christians went evidently to beget and diffuse veneration for the principles that could inspire them, he strove, if possible, to clothe the heathen worship in the same fascinating exterior, and thus oppose Christianity with its own weapons. "Since nothing," says he, in a letter to a pagan priest, "has contributed more to the progress of the Christian superstition, than their attention to the poor and friendless, let us even exceed them in this way; let us immediately establish hospitals and other asylums for indigence and infirmity in every city; for certainly it is no small ground of reproach that we should be so glaringly deficient in these things, whilst those impious Galileans cherish and relieve, not only the

wretched of their own communion, but likewise of ours."

In addition to this striking testimony of primitive benevolence, it is recorded, that, in a single town, namely that of Alexandria, there were annually five hundred individuals chosen out of the body of Christians to superintend the relief of the diseased poor only; and so excessive was the zeal of benevolence in this way, that Eusebius, (a Christian,) in describing a plague that laid waste the interior of Egypt, has these remarkable words: "Multitudes of our brethren, without distinction of rank, sacrificing life to the principle that inspired them, supported the loathsome and infected bodies of the expiring in their arms; and, after losing their eyes, carried them on their shoulders to the grave, only living to receive, in the course of a few succeeding moments, the same prompt, generous, and intrepid office of mercy from others."

To poor prisoners and captives the relief was also never-failing and extraordinary;

witness only what is related of a Christian bishop, who, together with the entire clergy of his diocese, sacrificed all they possessed at the moment, and were to derive from the revenue of their respective benefices for one or more years, to alleviate the sufferings of many Christians then languishing in the prisons of Rome, under the united pressure of cruelty and famine.

My brethren, how much do misfortunes of this nature, though arising from another source, call, in this city, for our tenderest recollection! If there be any species of inhumanity that exceeds all others in the wantonness of its principle, it is that of committing a human being to the calamity of a rigorous confinement, often for a trifling debt, possibly the result of disasters which no kind of precaution, nor the best regulated industry could fence against. Perhaps the father of a large family, thus plucked from his counter, or his craft, and delivered to hunger and disease; and, what I conceive to be a much greater evil, the tortures of his mind, at the forlorn situation of objects the most dear to him, deprived of the labour

that maintained, and the parent whose example instructed, whose laborious industry fed them! The unfeeling creditor, whom neither the supplications of a wife, or cries of helpless infants could soften into pity, becomes himself a sufferer by his cruelty, or generally, at least, reaps no advantage from it, unless it be to gratify a barbarous heart, and increase the burdens of the community.

To resume my subject; there was no possible calamity, to which the indefatigable eye, and burning heart of primitive benevolence was not directed. It appears from a commentary of one of the Fathers on the gospel of St. Matthew, that not reckoning widows and orphans, destitute children, and strangers, and lepers, and those whose distress was only discovered by investigation, or if I may so call it, the sacred curiosity of charity; that besides those various cases, there were four thousand poor of other descriptions, supported by the Christian benefactions of one small quarter of the city of Constantinople.

And that even a studied and dignified ostentation in the display of this virtue was deemed justifiable, we find from a singular example with respect to the emperor Decius. The tyrant demanded the fancied treasures of the Church; a deputation replied on the part of the body, and requested but a day to satisfy the order; in the interim they assembled the lame, the blind, the diseased, friendless infancy, and helpless decrepitude, an interesting and motley group of all wretchedness, and producing them, exclaimed, "Behold the treasures of the Church; this is the only wealth and inheritance which Jesus Christ has bequeathed to his disciples."

I have collected those examples, as the best demonstration, how far, even the most benevolent Christians among us, have yet to improve, before they arrive at the standard of love and charity, which, in their primitive brethren, was a living commentary on the practice and doctrine of our divine master. We see therefore clearly, that whatever our virtue in this way may be, and great manifestly

it is, we have still ground to beware of illusion, or false security. It is a sunken rock, the more fatal from its not creating apprehension of danger. More Christian souls have been wrecked on it, than on those of open depravity.

That a man who, after serious examination of his practice, finds it, generally speaking, conformable to what conscience and religion prescribe, should rest in a great degree satisfied with himself is both reasonable and just.

When self-approbation is founded in truth, it becomes obviously legitimate; it is the first fruit and first compensation of virtue; but he who, from the want of such severe and honest scrutiny, unhappily deems himself what he is not, resembles the dropsical infirm, who would mistake, for sound and increasing flesh, the mere consequence of a disorder, that is sinking him to the grave.

Self-love disguises itself in so many forms, is so subtile and ingenious, whether to

extenuate our greatest defects, or give superior lustre to our moderate virtues, that even the wisest may be deceived. It is a gross, and not uncommon illusion among some Christians, to judge of their individual merits and sufficiency, in the discharge of the duty before us, by the magnificent effects that have resulted from the general practice. This is coming at justification on the point; or, to speak more familiarly, going to Heaven nearly at free cost. No, my brethren, if we aspire thither, it must be with our own wings; or we remain fixed to the earth. Every Christian is to look to himself, and honestly ask his heart, what share he has borne in producing, and still bears in perpetuating, those glorious monuments of mercy, that exalt us in the eyes of nations.

Many and awful are the warnings we receive in the sacred writings, on the danger of worldly prosperity. When it is said, that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God; those certainly were not intended to disturb our

muscles by their singularity; but to convey the strongest imaginable idea of the extreme facility, with which the blessings of such a complexion may be converted into the last of misfortunes. And you may judge what impression this awful truth is capable of making on the soul of a true Christian, when I tell you, that one of yourselves, one of the wealthiest and most merciful characters of this nation, has been heard to declare, that though he endeavoured to discharge his trust in the relief of all indigence to the very utmost, he yet, never in the course of his life, reflected upon the extent of that sacred obligation, without encreased fear and trembling.

Whether such a feeling be salutary or puerile, each will determine, according to the degree and seriousness of his faith. I shall conclude these reflections with observing, that I have not offered them in the spirit of reproach; far from it; but from a conviction, that to recommend a serious appeal to our own bosoms, as the only means of dissipating all illusions, and clearly discovering how far we come up to

what is solemnly required of us, according to our ability, is the sacred duty of every minister of God, who has either an atom of zeal for the cause, or care for the salvation of those whom he addresses.

It would not be easy for me to offer novelty of matter in the case for which we are assembled. Whether we follow such unhappy creatures in a state of dereliction, from the first advances of misery and vice, through every gradation, to a sad and often horrible catastrophe; whether we look to the enormous guilt of those men, who lie in wait for the destruction of such innocence; whether we consider the supereminent obligation, of being engaged more on these occasions, by a regard for their salvation, than pity for their temporal misfortunes; whether we reflect upon the extraordinary, nay irresistible influence, which woman naturally possesses in the diffusion of virtue or vice; there is not one of those various and most sacred motives, in the present case, that has not been fully urged on you, at least to the utmost extent of my ability, in a multiplicity of former discourses.

Why then should I trouble you on points, which I have neither language nor imagination to present in new colours? Perhaps, even the interest of these orphans would have required another advocate. Be that as it may, I must say, that you have long heard me on the subject with singular patience. I am blessed with the effect, and never do I wish to see the moment that would efface from my soul the tenderest recollection of such generosity and indulgence. I commit then, with perfect tranquillity, the event of the day, to your established sense of the merits of this great institution; justly indeed styled great, when we look to a scale of protection, comprehensive without example, I am sure, at this moment, in any nation upon earth.

The number is now one hundred and twenty-five, and will shortly be one hundred and forty, fatherless and motherless creatures, all maintained and educated within the walls of one establishment, with little aid but the result of a single day's appeal to public mercy; and how doubly glorious to our metropolis, when it is considered, that

besides this, and in times more or les unfavourable to the circumstances of all ranks, it not only provides assiduously, and even splendidly, for all other public objects, but is every day indulging its passion for such good in the imagination of new.

It is said by the unfaithful steward in the gospel "To dig I am unable, to beg I am ashamed." I will reverse the assertion, so far as to say, that to beg I certainly am not ashamed. It is a profession I glory in, and I bless God, I have never failed with you. I therefore remind you, again and again, my brethren, that it is not one hundred and twenty-five, but one hundred and forty that now implore you.

Tis true, the burden is now greater than ever; but it is not you that can be alarmed at it, since, strictly speaking, it is one of your own creating. Yield then, my brethren, on this occasion, as you have invariably done, to the supreme delight of doing good. Try, whether the additional sacrifice that is now required of you, will not prove a rich mine of pleasure to your hearts;

whether to-morrow's sun will not behold you rising from your pillows with joy, at the recollection of having fairly and fully met the increased exigence of the case, which, in all its views, I will venture to pronounce, as sacred and affecting as ever addressed itself to the bosom of a Christian.

As many of you, my children, and by that name I feel I may call you; as many of you are old and instructed enough to admit a word of serious admonition, let me in the first place recommend everlasting gratitude to heaven, for having given you to see the light in the bosom of such mercy. Prove yourselves worthy of it by your diligence and docility, and when you go forth into the world, full fraught with those sacred principles, which I know are carefully and profoundly instilled into you, beware of the examples you may meet even in the most religious families.

Fondness of society with the common run of servants, though it may not always lead to positive destruction, will yet infallibly weaken in your hearts, the love of

purity, and abhorrence of guilt and profaness.

Avoid that intercourse without affectation, but as much as the nature of your avocations will admit. Above all, never forget to preserve a severe though respectful distance with masters and growing offspring of the same sex. It is too natural for girls in your station, to be flattered by the notice they attract from such quarters; but woe unto her, who is not on her guard against her own frailty, and the frailty of others.

Let all your leisure hours be employed, not in the secret perusal of those dangerous and silly tales, that may be scattered in your way, and which, unfortunately, too much beguile the hours of your betters; but of that sacred volume, which is now exclusively in your hands, and alone can secure your felicity here and for ever.

There is but one point more, on which I deem it necessary to counsel you, that is, a passion for dress; it is too much the practice of those, who take children from this

institution in particular, to foment that dangerous inclination, by decorating them to the utmost, without reflecting, that vanity is a door by which the devil invariably enters into such hearts.

This is the first time I have addressed you, it is the sincere expression of my affection for those, whose cause it has been my lot to recommend from its cradle to a glorious maturity, and may possibly be remembered by some of you, when he who has recommended it may be incorporated with the dust.

May that God who has declared himself to be the father of the fatherless, inspirit the hearts of these, your hitherto unchanged benefactors, to do this day, according to the necessity, in the protection of this first of Christian Charities, for Jesus Christ his sake! Who with him and the Holy Spirit, liveth and reigneth, world without end; Amen.

And now to God the Father, &c.

# SERMON VI.

[For the Female Orphan House, Dec: 23, 1798.]

ST. JAMES, iii. 17.

*The wisdom that is from above is full of mercy.*

NEVER, in any period of our existence, did circumstances more unite to recommend the practice of this great virtue. Scarce breathing from the various and perhaps unparalleled evils of civil dissentions, what a spectacle does our bleeding country present at this moment, what a field for commisseration and the most active benevolence! What exertions will be necessary to repair the direful calamities of war!

It is not the thousands of widows and orphans it has made that appeal to us alone: not merely the sufferings of innocence we have to deplore and relieve; there is perhaps a greater, a nobler duty before us;

namely, to forget our injuries, and astonish the guilty, by an increasing system of tenderness and mercy; standing, as we are, in a situation so new to all hearts; so puzzling in point of present remedy, to the best understanding; so big, (if I may say so), with the great secret of our future destiny as a nation.

For one do I declare the firm and rooted conviction of my soul, that nothing else will finally restore subjection and tranquillity, allure the desperate from their fastnesses, re-people our deserts, create confidence and affection, tread down the horrid spirit of religious animosity, revive industry and labour; in a word, disarm the heart, and enlighten the phrenzy of our unhappy people.

Some there may be who, smarting from wounds inflicted on their country, would cry out for a contrary policy, and judge, that our future security calls rather for examples of implacable severity. The wisdom that is from above is full of mercy, it will take a contrary course: while it displays

the power to crush, it will likewise display the tenderest inclination to heal; it will treat with the human heart, (which, with little distinction, is the same in all men;) for it knows, that no conquest over the guilty is more lasting, or more sure, than where remorse can be awakened, and gratitude excited, by the reception of an unexpected and unmerited favour.

Perhaps, among the many evils that have arisen, from the dreadful visitation we have experienced, it is not the least, that too many of us have been led to view our condition through the false medium of exasperation and passion. Long familiarity with the scenes of summary justice, if it has not created the appetite, has at least lessened the horror of blood.

The placable spirit of Christianity should never be borne down by the horrible impulse of retaliation and revenge. To give peace to our mangled and distracted country, no effort, no parley can be degrading; to savages we should leave the savage luxury

of returning evil for evil, cruelty for cruelty, blood for blood.

Never, even in the remotest degree, should we let ourselves be hurried into an imitation of those actions we profess to abhor; nor ever should it be forgotten, that even a single life, sacrificed without necessity, is the deepest national disgrace; is a ground of awful responsibility before the throne of God; and encreases a thousand fold the rancour and animosity of the vanquished.

All will certainly not be with me in what I am going to assert, but of this I am clear, that our glorious constitution in church and state, may have much more to fear from the precipitate zeal of its friends, than the power of its enemies; and that they should be reckoned the best benefactors of our country, who labour to protect it from the impolitic and unchristian exercise of triumphant fury.

I do more than hope, that the instruction of the rising generation, will now at

least become an object of peculiar attention; woeful experience is come at last to verify the truth of observations on this subject, which for many years have been zealously and repeatedly pressed on you.

Often have you been told, that if ever these specious and destructive principles, that were shaking every foundation of human happiness in a neighbouring country, and disgracing the name of man by unheard-of affliction, found their way into this, they would raise a flame, which torrents of human blood might be insufficient to extinguish; and perhaps, nothing short of total and undistinguished ruin.

How far this prediction has been accomplished, you have seen; let me not recall what is fresh in your recollection; what is spread out before you in tints that may never fade. To the latest hour of your lives, while memory remains a faculty of the mind, humanity will weep, and religion shudder, at the horrors that have been crowded into the short space of one season. I pass them over; may we live to atone for

the share we have had in them! May they never rise in judgment against us! I do most solemnly declare, the more I consider the natural effect of causes, the more I am induced to pardon the guilt (if I may say it) of the people, even white as snow, when compared to ours. I would almost say, they could not have acted otherwise than as they did. Minds so completely depraved, so entirely unoccupied by any restraining sentiment, were filled with matter too inflammable, possibly to resist those infernal principles that hovered around them. The knowledge of God and the blessings of religion, (those infallible sources of subordination and virtue,) we had almost totally neglected to diffuse; the very little we had been goaded to in this way, served but to throw the eye over the immensity that remained to be done; and like spots of cultivation, to render the surrounding sterility more striking and apparent.

The great mass of our people continued still an untutored and unfortunate race, without interest in the public weal; with deep and hereditary animosity to the state

and its institutions; ripe for destroying all above them; brutal in vice, brutal in ignorance; ferocious of soul, and panting for the signal of revolt and blood.

To this spectacle of degraded nature, of barbarism in the bosom of civilization, of mental darkness in the midst of revelation and light, we remained hardened and insensible. The great misfortune, the uncivilized condition of Ireland, became no uncommon theme of sarcasm, even to Irishmen.

Thus did we live Christians without zeal; citizens without public virtue; men without bowels of humanity; corrupt, venal, dissipated and luxurious; our means were all devoted to the gratification of our passions; and the united cry of religion and our country reached us in vain, amidst the eager pursuits of personal interests, and the agitations of a life most shamefully secular.

The hour of retribution at length came; national iniquity provoked national judgments, and our own people were destined,

as they had long been trained, to become the ready and furious executioners of the sentence.

Let not the valour and loyalty we have displayed, or the laurels we wear, deceive us so far, as to leave no room in our hearts, but for pride and exultation; when we consider our omissions on the point I speak of, perhaps if there be hearts under heaven that should know neither pride nor peace, they are ours.

To have manfully opposed the tempest that has burst on us; to have bled (or been ready to bleed) when murder and rapine were at our doors, when our constitution, our altars, and every private blessing we enjoyed, were marked for destruction, was doing no more than the wretched inhabitant of an uncivilized country would have done, (to maintain the dominion, and protect the peaceful misery of his hut;) but oh! what ground of eternal remorse, to reflect, that we have, with our own hands, sown the seed of all the calamities that have come upon our country; all the enor-

mities that have dishonoured religion and human nature; all the outrages committed on every feeling of humanity; all the souls that have perished, and miseries that have been entailed on the innocent and unoffending, in the course of this unhappy contest.

But let us not despair. We have been chastened, but not devoted. Heaven, in the immensity of its mercy, hath shewed us the precipice on which a nation stands, "whose God is not the Lord;" we have been spared the tremendous and irrecoverable fall; we still exist in the possession of those blessings for which we struggled, and torn from which, a man not restrained by religion, might scorn to live; we are still allowed to repair long, fatal, and most decided errors. Let us not rely too much on the present calm we enjoy; it is, if possible, more aweful than the storm. If we look back with horror, we should look around us with diffidence and trembling; we should feel all the precariousness of our situation; nor should the mind ever bury

its alarms but in the well-founded prospect of a future security.

To provide for this every good and wise man in the community is anxiously revolving the means. It is my duty, however, to remind you, that, if there is a God above us, whose patience is certainly not inexhaustible; who sports with the best concerted enterprizes of man; we should endeavour to conciliate his favour, and attract his blessings, by a firm resolution to regenerate ourselves, and regenerate our people.

Nor will I hesitate to add, that, were all the political wisdom of the earth assembled to frame, I do not say a present, but a permanent remedy to the evils of our condition, their efforts would be vain, without attention to the culture of the rising generation. The happy and powerful effects of religion on societies, on the morals, and manners of mankind, is evinced by the experience of ages; and the only example that has occurred of an impious and successful conspiracy to overturn, through a great nation, this fundamental pillar of subordination and

virtue, has been followed by such principles of anarchy, and enormity of crimes, as, I trust, will keep alive, to the last period of time, the caution, dread, and execration of the whole Christian world.

There is an object I deem it right, on this occasion, most earnestly to recommend. It is not unconnected with my subject; and, if I can persuade myself, that the aweful conjuncture in which we have stood has had the effect of exciting the serious recollection of our duties, and that we have nothing more sincerely and ardently at heart, than to give a firm support to the renewal of religion and morals, through every channel of society, I may be allowed to hope, that, in the bosom of our families, this so sacred and indispensable concern will experience all the weight of our authority and example. Our families are the natural and immediate field of our zeal in this cause. Indifference to it in any other sphere would be highly criminal; indeed, at this time, peculiarly abominable. In what terms should I speak of it where the responsibility is so peculiarly direct, the harvest so sure, and the evils that

arise from the neglect lie so immediately under our eyes to goad and reproach us? As the heads of families, we are, if I may so express myself, the chief posts of a confederacy in support of the general good. To us the superintendency of a portion of our fellow-creatures is solemnly committed by God and our country. Nor can we fly from the trust reposed in us, without doing what in us lies to counteract the saving and beneficent views of God, and weakening the great edifice of public happiness.

Perhaps, my friends, if human laws could, without inconvenience, take cognizance of such things; no man would deserve their severity more than he, who, by direct example or connivance, renders his house a seminary of vice and licentiousness, which must naturally operate to the annoyance of the community; but which, on great occasions, will too often come forth to assist in its destruction.

I make this remark, because in the course of the late rebellion we have more than conjecture; we have indubitable evidence, that

servants, in numerous instances, if not the actual perpetrators, have, at least, by the vilest perfidy, removed all obstructions to the bloodiest barbarities; and, in some cases, even the most generous and indulgent masters found no security from the monstrous ingratitude of wretches hurried away by the cruel, rapacious, and subverting spirit of the times. Nor can any doubt be entertained, that the number is comparatively very few, in the metropolis or out of it, who have not bound themselves with that union which has attempted to overturn the property, religion, and constitution of the nation. To this class, then, of your fellow-Christians look with the warmest zeal and compassion.

Of the duty you owe your children I speak not, having dwelt on it at large, when last I had the honour of addressing you from this place; and, indeed, if there be any subject which one would think it should be unnecessary to urge on a Christian congregation, it is certainly that. Melancholy experience, however, has convinced us, that the most sacred of all obligations can be very imperfectly accomplished, and that

many of our youth would seem much better trained to vilify the principles, and disclaim all respect for the duties of religion, than to glory in what they profess, and do honour to it by their practice. I am happy, however, to understand, that the little miserable affectation of profaneness and infidelity, so current among them, that base sacrifice of the little they know, and the few impressions they have received, to contemptible motives of vanity and fashion, is, in some degree, concealing itself; at all events, I call on the zealous and informed boldly to rebuke it; to treat it, without ceremony or mercy wherever they may find it, or from whatever lips it may fall: shyness, or respect of persons on this subject is not for the aweful grandeur of the present moment, when religion and its virtues seem to be the last stay of a convulsed and sinking world.

But however deficient we may be with respect to our children, it is manifest we are more so with respect to our servants and dependants. How few Christians will reflect, or, perhaps, even admit, that the morals of this class are any concern of theirs.

Nothing, however, more certain; nor is there a rule in our holy religion more inviolable than that every man possessing authority over another is responsible for his conduct, according to the measure of that authority.

The very principles of reason inform us, that all government is constituted for the advantage of the governed. Thus, kings and princes belong more to their subjects, than their subjects to them. Nor does the weight of such an engagement derogate from their greatness, or take any ray from the lustre of their crowns: for what can be more glorious, or draw man nearer to the Divinity, than to exist only for the felicity of others? By the same rule, a master in his family, which is a kingdom in miniature, is not to consider those unfortunate persons submitted to his controul as mere instruments to promote his convenience, and fill up the splendour and magnificence of his train, but as fellow-creatures, and fellow-Christians, possessing the most serious claim on him; nor is there a doubt, but that as he is bound in rigorous justice to compen-

sate their labour, and as common humanity obliges him not to desert them in their infirmities, so he is likewise called upon to be their apostle, to labour zealously and assiduously for their sanctification; and that if they perish through his neglect, he will be as certainly accountable for their blood, as he would be, under the same circumstances, for the blood of his children. But how are we generally affected by this alarming truth? What pains do we see taken to impress servants with religious sentiments? What is become of that sacred practice which once obtained in Christian families, of summoning them to morning and evening prayers? Is there a master or mistress in a thousand, who would not blush to have it spread abroad, that they were capable of such antiquated drudgery? or, as more probably it would be called, such canting hypocrisy? And yet I have seen a woman in this country, the very first in rank, and second to none in virtue, she is now no more! despising, on this and every other point of Christian duty, the shafts of fashionable ridicule, and regularly performing, with her own lips, the

charitable office in the midst of her assembled family.

With respect to public worship, who makes it a point that his servants should regularly attend it? Cut off from the only means of knowing that there is such a thing as religion, or a God, from whence are they to derive light? Or, are they instructed to reverence the sabbath in any other way? On the contrary, what scandalous profanations of it do they not witness, and, from the nature of their function, are often obliged to participate! See them collected in groups around the doors of this temple, polluting the sacredness of the day with intemperance, indecency, and imprecations; while their employers within are giving a public, though more refined example, how far an express commandment of God can be despised and trampled on. I speak not of the various other sinister impressions they receive from improper example, and the little reserve often shown in their presence, either as to word or action. Need I observe to those who know that man is an imitative creature, how impossible it is for

mercenary and uneducated souls not to despise what they see despised; to practise what they see practised; and to become, in all respects, faithful counterparts of the originals they have daily and hourly before their eyes? But, Great God! in what terms sufficiently indignant shall we speak of those who, not satisfied with the perversion of their servants in the ordinary way, that is, by the usual operation of evil example, scruple not to render them direct accomplices of their actions; and sometimes in a way which the respect I owe to this place will scarce allow me to hint at? Who are taught to receive the importuning and necessitous creditor with shuffling denials, perhaps with insolence and rebuke.—Servants, who are commanded to close the door, with inhuman brutality, against petitions of misery.—Servants who, when the occasion requires it, are called upon to be the ready ministers of vengeance and resentment.—Servants, who are instructed to cater for the vilest of human propensities; to bribe poor and unhappy parents to the prostitution of their children, and lead an innocent

and trembling victim to pollution and infamy; to the loss of peace and happiness for ever!

Is there any mystery of iniquity; any office of darkness, in which your knowledge of the world does not tell you they are employed? Great God! how often do they come into families, pure from the harmless pursuits of a country life, inexperienced in all vice, and leave them knowing and contaminated as the serpent!

Can the mind of man conceive any thing more detestable than to presume on their dependent condition, and drive them to the deplorable necessity of adopting between the support of life and the perdition of their souls!

I leave this subject. I should not have touched it, had not the necessity of cleansing an Augean stable become manifest to the commonest observer. I am astonished to think, that Christians, who know their religion, and believe in its menaces, can hope for any mercy when they show it not to those whom God and nature have com-

mitted to their protection. Unhappy beings! left without faith, without divinity, without any rule of conduct, or a single temptation to the practice of any human virtue! rolling from house to house, from service to service, equally neglected in all, picking up some precious lesson, some new particularity in each, and from a life of eternal rotation, becoming at last a monstrous compound of all characters and all vices! Let us recollect our duty, recollect our responsibility. It is not possible the principles of our education can be so effaced as to leave us at ease on the subject of future responsibility. How gross is that delusion, to tremble for our properties, our lives, and all the various enjoyments, which imagination magnifies, and a short period will annihilate; and not tremble at the great reverse that may await us at the tribunal of a living and inexorable God! I know there is no sentiment in nature more difficult to excite, than the apprehension of futurity, on the hearts of lukewarm Christians; and yet, where faith is not entirely extinct, there must be moments of reflection, some unexpected and importunate

flashes of light, that force the reluctant eye beyond the confines of the grave. It is not necessary to spur the miser to the care of his treasure; or the ambitious to besiege and importune the man who has favours to bestow, and cut their way by means, however base, to the possession of riches and honours; or the voluptuous, to strew flowers in their paths, and pass their days in the midst of festivity and enjoyment. No, because vigilance and industry are inseparable from all passion. Shame! indelible shame! that the man of folly and corruption is ever awake, and the man of eternity, the man destined to a glorious and everlasting being, wrapt in the profoundest lethargy!

If we are believers, let us beware. We know our guilt is recorded far beyond this miserable and short-lived scene of existence. The terrific aspect of our temporal affairs, and the judgment to come on a two-edged sword, that should rouse and alarm us. Let us provide as we ought against misfortune in time and eternity.

Let our present sacrifices in support of religion bring future security to our country and security to our souls: we can avoid the pressure of divine justice, neither here or hereafter. We must atone or perish, we feel our steps accelerate from hence, we want not lessons on the mortality of man. If ever day was learned on the subject, it is that in which we live and breathe. We tread on nothing but ruins. We live, I may say, among tombs; we have seen God every instant blowing on the proudest edifices of prosperity, and laying idols in the dust. Let us not go on blindly in the face of instruction and be wrecked in pursuit of bubbles.

Stretch the Gospel as we will, our only business on this earth is, to do good; is benevolence, is utility, is to labour for our salvation and the salvation of others.

By this rule will every man, of every rank and profession, stand or fall for ever. May God give us to impress this great outline of christian conduct on our hearts; to

guard against the hour that will bring a woeful remedy to all delusion.

It has fallen to my lot, during a course of many years, to be the constant advocate of the children before you; and though my inability to do proper justice to the cause is naturally increased in proportion to the frequency of my appearance, I have still the happiness to reflect, that the support they have experienced has been, with little exception, uniformly great. This leaves me perfectly at ease with respect to the result of this appeal. Indeed, an institution so uncommonly numerous as this, one hundred and fifty female orphans, destitute of human protection else, annually supplied with the means of life, is a clear proof that there exists a great spirit of mercy in this country, which wants but the additional spur of public virtue and religion to bring about the extended system of protection to the children of the poor, which every friend to society, and every true Christian must devoutly wish for, and particularly under the present climax of all vice and disorder among the people.

I cannot then, without being guilty of injustice, apprehend, on this occasion, any diminution of your former favours to this institution.

You have before you the same motives you ever had; and though I should suppose, which I am far from doing, that you were insensible to new considerations, that your zeal for religion and morals was no way influenced by any thing you had seen, and had shuddered at, I should yet be assured that your hearts would not suffer you to abandon that which your hearts had impelled you to take up. I know the human character enough, to be convinced, that unaccountable transitions from much feeling to no feeling at all belongs not to it. It is true, the vast and unlimited empire of artificial wants stands too much in the way of the most inherent of all sentiments. Opulence naturally raises ramparts around men, which confine their eyes to the contemplation of their own enjoyments, and will not let them roam over the calamities of the world. The rich are often unjustly accused; they want not the will, but the freedom to

follow nature to the great extent it would lead them.

Their hearts are in a fortress, vigilantly guarded by the passions, which misery is generally too feeble to carry. It may possess itself of an angle or a bastion, but the victory is seldom complete. Place men however in circumstances where they may feel themselves too strong for the tyranny they are bound in: let them behold with their own eyes, the shocking and inscrutable distinction between their own condition and that being, formed by the same God; redeemed by the same blood; destined to the same immortality; and nature will be instantly, and often gloriously vindicated. It is all on the side of mercy, and never I believe was the heart of man insensible to such a consideration, without feeling that secret shame, that uncomfortable sensation, which prompts him to get rid of the importuning object, as expeditiously as possible, in order to get rid of himself.

Who then shall take no interest in these children, that ever received impressions

through the eye, or through the medium of reflection? Did innocence come embodied from Heaven, it would not engage us more than in the person of an unprotected female infant. To shield such objects from the blast of vice and misfortune, must be our first thought, our first impulse on beholding them. They appeal to us, like lambs going to the sacrifice; we feel an horror at abandoning what so clearly appears without power to save itself; our imagination carries us in an instant, through every gradation of the horrid fate that awaits them; and the more we are shocked at all the extremities of misery and pollution, the more irresistibly are we drawn to the creature that is yet pure! If we are parents we reflect, by an instant and involuntary emotion, on our children, the pride and delight of our eyes; and, while our hearts are transported at their immaculate purity and security from shame, we burn to prevent the evil we so much abhor, and communicate the blessing we so much revere. How? shall we take no interest in the cause of those children, when we look to future effects of their protection? See it in a life of

peace, of virtue, of character, of respect. See it in a laborious assiduity to impress on the hearts of their children the sacred principles they have received: see it in that gratitude which wearies Heaven for blessings on the heads of those who had compassion on their youth.

Ransack the whole world of pleasure, look for superior enjoyment in vanities, in vices, in all the revelry of the senses, never will you find any equal to the sensation you experience; the delicious tear will steal into the eye at the view of the happiness you have communicated. Oh what a delightful duty is beneficence, and how worthy of being practised actively for our present felicity!

I dwell not on the darker side of this case. God knows it has no light or shade which, to the best of my ability, I have not over and over endeavoured to bring before you; why then should I presume to fatigue you with melancholy repetitions?

However varied in form, the misfortune

you have to prevent, is scarce distinguished, by any feature, however revolting, from the misery which lies daily in your path, through every avenue of this vast city; or what may be concealed from your eye, your imagination may well reach, the lingering martyrdom of famine, the loathsomeness of disease. Death striking one wretched victim while it marks another by her side. Imprecations against heaven. The black despair of the expiring!

Nay, as I some time ago observed in another place, and have much more reason to observe now, the evil is come to so enormous a pitch, that we see, absolutely, children scarce endowed with reason, to whom offence is scarce imputable, hurried in swarms down the stream of this infernal torrent.

Is it in nature not to bleed for these before you, when you reflect on such things? Or did all the spirit of the Divinity ever appear to breathe on human action, if it be not in support of an institution like this.

Particular circumstances have occasioned the present appeal to be brought forward much earlier in the season than was intended it should: this is a great and manifest disadvantage, as many persons of wealth and consideration, who invariably attended on this occasion, are now absent from town. I rely, nay I am sure you will therefore be induced nobly and generously to redouble your exertions; you will not suffer an establishment so long the pride of the metropolis, so cherished and so patronized by all the virtue of the nation, to become the victim of unavoidable casualty.

I am sensible there are some individuals in this place, not usually resident among us, natives of another soil, whose souls, I have had evidence in the case of those who perished in the late rebellion, are as large as their properties are immense; this, no doubt I consider a most providential circumstance in this moment of distress; but to you, my friends, the natural, and always ardent protectors of these orphans, I am bound above all to look, nor shall I be deceived: true mercy, like true valour, is

stimulated by difficulties; it rises in proportion to the call upon it, and it is not such hearts as yours, that will prevent the usual glory of this day from the wretched consideration that it will cost you more than usually dear."

I will trouble you no more; you see I have not laboured to excite you, because I know, from long experience, that your leaning to these fatherless and motherless orphans is peculiar. Perhaps there is not, under heaven, a more glorious and transporting reflection, than to think that we sit in this place, like so many Divinities, giving, at a word, life, health, present happiness, and immortal bliss, to the most forlorn and friendless of all human creatures. I have done.

"Glory be to God on high, and peace and good-will among men."

# SERMON VII.

[The Love of our Country.]

BOOK OF WISDOM, C. XII. V. 13.

*For neither is there any God but thou that carest for all.*

TO unite mankind in the bonds of society seems ever to have been a primary object in the designs of God. In the order of nature, we behold his providence anxiously directed to the accomplishment of this great purpose, through the powerful medium of man's necessities, and the instinctive attachment he feels for his species. In the written law there is evidently less attention to define and establish our obligations to him, than to society; all the precepts of the decalogue, with the exception of two, tend clearly to this object. Of the twelve tribes of Israel, he destined but one to the ceremonies of his worship. Of the fruits of the earth he exacted but the

first. Of the days of the week he reserved but one sabbath, the rest he devoted to the felicity of his people.

In the law of grace, this merciful solicitude is still more apparent. For the whole drift of the gospel is obviously to frame all the inhabitants of the earth into one society, that society into the nature of one family, that family, if I may so say, into one heart. "Holy father! grant that they all may be one; as thou art in me, and I in thee. That they may be one, "even as we are one." Such was the most benevolent prayer of our divine master, of whom we may say, with respect to society, what he said of himself, with respect to the ancient law, that he came not to destroy, but to perfect it.

It appears therefore indubitable, my brethren, that according to the letter and spirit of our religion, we owe to the community of which we are members, and from which we derive every public and private blessing, the most ardent affection, and consequently, the most zealous endea-

vour, to promote in all things, its happiness, its honor and its glory. This is the subject, on which I propose to offer the few reflections that have occurred to me, on an hasty consideration of it, and under the sanction of which, I shall beg leave in the sequel to submit the claims, rather of the happy than the unfortunate individuals you are assembled to assist.

I ought to consider it as a circumstance peculiarly fortunate for me on this occasion, that while labouring under the disadvantage inseparable from a first appearance, I have to recommend a cause, too nearly connected with the feelings of every friend to his country, not to inspire a disposition to hear me with more than ordinary indulgence.

It has been asserted, my brethren, by the enemies of our religion, that if it does not directly discourage, it does at least, not inculcate the love of our country. Nay that the sort of zeal it inspires is utterly unfriendly to the interest of every society. As if we had so learned Christ, as to stand

detached from all those concerns and connections, by which we are expressly bound to approve ourselves to God; and as if the law of universal benevolence were a law of unfeeling and unnatural indifference to the interests and happiness of mankind.!

But such assertions, like a thousand others, from the same source, have been too often, and too ably refuted, to require I should dwell long on them. I am free indeed to acknowledge, that when religion degenerates into superstition and fanaticism, it occasionally becomes the source of monstrous and incalculable evils to society. There is no species of history, which a benevolent man reads with more distress to his feelings, than the history of the church.

One shudders to think, what scenes of blood and discord have existed at different times in the world, as it were by divine authority; various and discordant parties of Christians labouring to annoy and exterminate each other, like wild beasts, with unwearied perseverance and every circum-

stance of the most refined barbarity; the very shout of persecution and intolerance issuing from the pulpit of God, and the spirit and dye of the Koran transplanted into the gospel of peace.

But as well might God himself be made responsible for such horrors, as the law which expressly reproves and condemns them. Let the answer be recollected, which our blessed Lord made to his disciples, when they required him, in the true spirit of sanguinary bigotry, to command fire from heaven for the destruction of a Samaritan village; "Ye know not," said he; "what manner of spirit ye are of." The Son of Man came not to inspire principles of hatred and disunion, or cruelty and revenge, but to fill the human bosom with mutual forbearance and affection.

What a striking contrast then do all bitter and uncharitable feelings present to the character of HIM, who was so eminently the friend of all mankind, and who bequeathed to the world this glorious and immortal sentence, "By this shall all men

know that you are my disciples, if you love one another;" a sentence, which I most heartily wish, had been written on the frontispiece of all Christian temples, on the walls of the Vatican, on the study of every Christian minister, and in the heart of every Christian; a sentence, which I am sure, if properly and universally attended to, would have been productive of more solid happiness, honour and glory to nations, than all that is recorded of heroism and greatness, in the history of human passions. If the genius of religion be, as its enemies assert, unfriendly to the interests of society, what other principle in the soul shall invariably urge man to promote them? What is to command those sublime sacrifices, which his country may often require at his hands? What is to prevent his aspiring to situations which require talent and qualifications to which he may be a stranger? What is to secure an indefatigable attention to his public duties? or steadily resist the temptation of his bringing his principles to the hammer, and thus basely cementing his private fortune to the injury of the common good?

Is reason sufficient, or is the natural love of rectitude, or regard to the world's opinion sufficient, to withstand, on every occasion, the mighty power of personal interest or ambition? How many men, who talk loudly and finely on the subject of public spirit, are marvellously silenced by the magic of some lucrative employment, in which the once-flaming patriot eats, in opprobrious peace, the oblivion of his shame and degradation? How often does resentment at unrequited services, or the feeling of disappointed ambition, inspire strenuous opposition to the wisest and most beneficial public measures, and even suggest practices directly inconsistent with the peace and order of society?

It is very possible, I confess, that man may be urged by some particular passion, whether it be for gold, power, or glory, to great exertions in the service of his country; but each of those passions, or the union of all, might, according to circumstances, as naturally lead him to attempt its ruin.

We are not surely blind to examples.

He that succeeds by a train of illustrious actions in towering above his fellow-citizens, is too easily transformed into their tyrant. No, my brethren, man, to discharge his part properly, whether in his public or private relations, must be supported by a principle more powerful than any he derives from nature or the world.

Such every day's experience proves to be the feeblest of all resources against his passions. It is from religion alone he can draw that virtue, which nothing can shake; that real greatness of soul which readily sacrifices repose, property, and life, to the public cause, without a view but the performance of his duty; and serves, with the same invariable zeal, a grateful or ungrateful country.

Of this we have a strong instance in the writings of one of the ablest and most intrepid defenders of Christianity in the fourth century. "Behold!" says he, addressing himself to the reigning emperor, "the effects of Christ's doctrine on his followers: though groaning under the most inhuman

edicts, we yet serve with fidelity in your fleets and armies; we defend your towns, your fortresses, your isles, your provinces, the assemblies of your people, your senate, and your palaces: we abandon you only at the threshold of your temples.

"Inspect our lives, what vices are they stained with? What virtues are they not adorned with? What description of your subjects contributes with more chearfulness, from the scanty resources of poverty, to supply the exigencies of the state? Who are less addicted to turbulence and commotion? What citizens more devoted to their prince? What soldiers more prodigal of their blood?

"The support of your throne you have no more to reproach us with, unless it be a crime to support our tyrants, and obey their orders; unless it be a crime to mourn in patient silence over the effects of violated justice and humanity; and prove the influence of a divine religion, which, while it prohibits us to deplore and detest your

cruelties, yet generously engages us to range under your eagles, and expire in your ranks."

On this passage there needs no comment. If religion be not calculated to inspire the most sublime devotion for our country, in vain shall we hope for it from any other principle under heaven. There is, inded, a species of public spirit, which every Christian must disclaim and abhor; because utterly repugnant to the spirit of the gospel. I mean that which lends a mask to an insatiable and merciless system of conquest and agrandisement, and pursues what is called national glory, through torrents of human blood. What dreadful examples might not be exhibited of this in every age of the world? Unfortunately the world has nearly in every age groaned under instances of this damnable conspiracy against the rights and tranquillity of mankind; and often, too often, have wondering and infatuated nations conferred the title of hero on men who, in the eye of reason, justice, and humanity, are no more than the worst scourges of the human race. It is la-

mentable to think, that the most destructive passions should have ever raised and immortalized man in the mind of man. That, under the sanction of brilliant and successful crimes, his name should proudly pass to posterity; while those virtues, that are the source of every blessing to society, are scarce deemed worthy of remark, or rapidly forgotten.

Well do nations deserve such masters, when they are dazzled by such glory. Let us now consider the other incentives we have to the love of our country. From our social union it is that we derive all those dear and tender connexions that constitute the leading charms and happiness of human life; that parents, children, brethren, friends, associates, fellow citizens, are all enabled to live and act together, in love and peace, mutual confidence and general security; that our inheritance, the fruits of our industry, and reward of our labours, are quietly enjoyed, and freely applied to purposes of benevolence and duty; that under the wholesome administration of those laws, which Providence hath appointed for our refuge

and protection, we fear no open violence, and recur to none for defence and redress; that we are led to cultivate every honest art and liberal refinement of a civil state; to extend our views and intercourse, and know all the enjoyments arising from a fellowship of things divine and human.

These are our private blessings. It is not, my brethren, to the sordid and selfish member of society that such considerations are addressed. He who hath not affections strong enough to pierce beyond the wretched circle of his own concerns, will think little of the grateful returns due to his country. It is the heart, full fraught with Christian benevolence, which consults joys in the joys, and sorrows in the sorrows of all around it, that is alone susceptible of true public virtue.

Suppose a man once divested of all great and generous feelings; every principle, however revered, honour, gratitude, friendship, country, even natural affection, will, in the balance of his perverted judgment, all be outweighed by interest. The sole

rule of his life is the maxim of the Roman satirist, Money any how! money: that is, if the plain and beaten paths of the world will not conduct him to that end, rather than fail he will fall into every labyrinth of fraud and iniquity. Gorge him as you will, his unslaked soul will still thirst for more.

As he is insensible to the calamities of his fellow creatures, so the greatest torment he can suffer is an appeal to his mercy. Should he stumble as the Samaritan, on some spectacle of woe, he will resist the honest movements of nature, and, like his worthy brother the Levite, rapidly pass to the other side of the way.

Suppose him, however, under the unavoidable necessity of listening to the petition of misery, he will endeavour to beat down the evidence of the case, by the meanest shifts and evasions, or cry aloud, like the brutal and insensible Nabal to the hungry soldiers of David, "Why should I be such a fool as to give my flesh which I

have prepared for my shearers, to men I know not from whence they be."

But admitting that a remnant of shame, for example, in the face of a congregation like this, should goad him for once to an act of beneficence; so unworthy of the great occasion would it probably be, that the idol of his soul would appear more distinctly in the relief he administers, than in the barbarous insensibility which habitually withholds it.

Immortal God, what a passion! and how much ought the power and fascination of that object to be dreaded, which can turn the human heart into such a pathless and irreclaimable desert? Irreclaimable, I say: for men enslaved by other passions are every day reformed and enlightened by the ministry of religion, or the sober reflection of increasing years; but who will say, that man in the extremity of selfishness was ever reclaimed by human resource; was ever vulnerable to reproach; or, I had almost added, even convertible by grace?

No! through every stage and revolution of life he remains invariably the same; or, if any difference appear, it is only this, that as he advances into the shade of a long evening, in his frail and sad decline of life, while tottering over a yawning grave, with every other passion long blasted in his heart, he seeks for more pelf with renewing eagerness; holds by a sinking world with an agonizing grasp, and drops into the earth with the increased curse of wretchedness on his head, without the tribute of a tear, from child, friend, or country; or any other inscription on the memory of the man, but that he lived to counteract the distributive justice of Providence, and died without hope or title to an happy immortality.

That there are few examples of so complete a transformation from our natural character, I admit. But, if avarice be rare, Mammon has still numerous adorers of another description; and little difference does it, in truth, make to the prolific order of misery, whether it be spurned by a heart of adamant, or not effectually relieved by those who are no otherwise attached to

money, than as the instrument of various indulgences. This I fear, my brethren, is a too general case.

But I have already departed too far from my subject. The next ground for affection for our country, is the wisdom and goodness of its institutions. Under dominion the most arbitrary, there is yet in the heart of every man an inherent love for the region of his nativity, which nothing can efface: probably founded in early and habitual intimacy with particular scenes, customs, and manners.

When civil government is more tolerable, the sentiment naturally acquires more ardor, as it flows besides from a sense of some real benefits, and the hope of extending them. But, my brethren, where men live, as we do, under a system of freedom, perhaps, all things considered, the most perfect that ever was, or ever can be devised by human understanding; where the meanest citizen is proudly and justly conscious of a superior lot, in the scale of comparison with other nations, and treads the ground with

nerve and pride, from a sense of his total independence and inviolable security from power, as to property and person; where the human mind is free to utter and publish its boldest thoughts on men and things without any controul, but that of laws, to which he has himself consented; and every thing conspires to call forth all the talent, and energy, and virtue of which human nature is susceptible; hideously insensible must that mind be which burns not with public affection!

Thank God, it is notoriously your character. It would require far other powers than mine, to do justice to the proofs you have given, in the course of a long and bloody contest, for every thing dear and sacred to you as freemen and Christians. The world has witnessed them; the enemy felt them. To look to your limits and population, they would savour of prodigy. Scarce discernible on the map of the earth, your fleets have yet extended from pole to pole, in a series of triumphs, as glorious as uninterrupted, and collected matter to puzzle the faith of future generations. Wherever your

armies have been, they either saw and conquered, or deserved to conquer by boldness of enterprise, and undaunted valour. Some reverse you have known; it is the fortune of war; but even from reverse you have drawn new energy.

In the very worst circumstances in which you were, to the astonishment of the world, of your foe, and perhaps your own, you have increased in tone and stature. The longer you persevered in the conflict, the mightier your designs, the more daring your exploits.

Such unconquerable spirit could alone arise from the greatness of the object for which you contended. Egypt will remain an everlasting monument of what Britons, and I call the well-affected of both countries by that proud and glorious name, can attempt and accomplish, under climate the most adverse, danger the most aweful, and against an enemy vainly assuming the title of Invincible.

In a word; while among the leading

powers of the continent, some early withdrew from the struggle, some, for a disgraceful security, tamely submitted to the yoke; and others, after a faithful application of all their energies and resources, found it vain to make head any longer against a resistless torrent, Britain alone, as a rock in the midst of the deep, continued to defy its utmost fury, appearing the more majestic and unimpressible from the wreck and humiliation of nations around her.

More, my brethren! Notwithstanding the union of seasons, of nearly famine, with all the calamities of war, not a moment's real interruption to internal order and tranquillity; the heaviest burdens borne with alacrity and joy. Never did the blood of patriotism run higher, than when called upon to make the greatest sacrifices; not a man in the nation was found base enough to recur to art and ingenuity to elude them; even the declared and original enemies to the war, as well as they who thought that peace ought to have been earlier accepted of, nobly proved that they differed from the mass of their fellow-citizens only as to the

means of securing the happiness of their country.

From one extremity of your coast to the other, the threatening invader saw and recoiled from a crested and formidable determination to conquer or perish in the threshold. Not all the splendid visions (and visions indeed have they proved,) of fraternity and equality, could shake the firm allegiance and fidelity of a people, whom long experience and sober reflection had instructed rightly to estimate the blessings they enjoyed.

That, in the happiest and best-constructed societies, some wretches should be found, rebels by nature to all rule and government, who, in the prospect of plunder or dominion, would eagerly grasp at any scheme of innovation, whatever horrors it might threaten to engender, cannot be wondered at, since heaven itself nourished serpents in its bosom, who preferred reigning in the abyss, to the fulness of happiness in the realms of glory.

For you, it is enough, that the scanty and miserable efforts of disaffection among you sunk under the execration of the many; or, in other words, were lost and overwhelmed, like spots on the disc of the sun, in the blaze of loyalty and attachment that encircled the constitution and the throne. Such, my brethren, is a feeble sketch of the proud effects that have resulted from the public virtue of Britons! nor do I hesitate to say, that to the invincible stand it has made, true liberty is indebted for still possessing one refuge in Europe. It is impossible for the mind not to adore the inscrutable judgments of God, when it beholds a people, after having waded through seas of blood, and run the circle of all conceivable calamity in the seeming pursuit of that inestimable distinction, return at last to the very point from which they started, gladly reposing under the yoke which they once furiously rent asunder, and hailing with the same voice the restorer of tranquillity and new oppressor of their country.

A solemn and incontestable proof, my brethren, that to attain or preserve the real

blessing of liberty, it is indispensably necessary that a nation should be worthy of it; worthy of it by a reverence for God, and a knowledge of virtues that adorn humanity; nor is there one evidence on record, of prevailing impiety and corruption of manners being compatible with ought but a state of profound political slavery.

The austere and virtuous days of the Grecian and Roman common-wealths were the only days of their freedom and glory. And here, my brethren, I am naturally prompted to observe, that "If no nation be so great, or hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God hath been unto us, in all things which we have called upon him for; if no nation be so great, or hath statutes and judgments so righteous, we should take heed to keep our souls diligently, lest we forget the things which our eyes have seen, and they depart from our hearts all the days of our lives."

Here have you, in the very words of God, a strong and faithful representation of your happy and glorious condition, with

a solemn admonition to evince a proper sense, and hold in your eternal recollection the source of such peculiar favour and peculiar protection, against the grasp of that gigantic ambition, which, under the mask of officious zeal for your interests, would have added you to the train of its innumerable victims. Look up, then, to the great example of Christian piety and virtue God has seated on your throne, and learn from thence ardently to cherish and propagate, as your stations and abilities admit, the principles and practice of true religion amongst you.

If such be the stay and the staff, the refuge and comfort of every individual, as well as sure support of every society, never forget that your eyes have seen what the detestable philosophy of the times, after long and profound meditation of its projects in solitude and silence, came forth at length to preach and exhibit, to an unenlightened world; declared impatience of all rule and controul; a general spirit of inquietude and turbulence; rooted contempt of all antient notions; burning de-

sire of novelties; youth without restraint, old age without remorse; nature itself no longer respected; parents undistinguished by tenderness for their children; children by the love and reverence of their parents; women by conjugal fidelity; citizens by the recollection of their duties; people by their former simplicity; vice the most abandoned; crimes the most atrocious, held in honour and estimation; shame reserved only for humanity and virtue; suicide a received and glorious resource under private misfortune or political disappointment; anarchy and confusion in all states and connections; no fixed and eternal rule of right; no society; no God. These are the blessings that issued from a school of superior light and wisdom, to grace and immortalize the happy subversion of Christianity!

Great God, what a warning example! and how peculiarly should it be felt, when you reflect, not only on the impious liberty, so prevalent amongst men at this day, of ridiculing and rejecting truth the most sacred and evident, from a miserable vanity

of appearing to soar above received opinions; but what is worse, on the notorious industry, with which the most diabolical, if you will pardon the expression, of all productions has been circulated both here and in Ireland.

Under such circumstances, remember, my brethren, that as Christians, and lovers of your country, you owe to the divine system you possess, the most unqualified support by practice and by word; not a silent or languid disapprobation of the bile that is cast on it; but a bold, prompt and manly defence of its interests, in the face of all consequences, without respect to persons. Remember that in vain is it taught and announced, or its glory displayed in the temple of God, if it otherwise decline through our slumber and indifference. Remember that when persecuted by tyrants, and forced to seek refuge in the caverns of the earth, no power could yet over-whelm it. The reason is obvious, because every Christian in those days was a model of what he professed, and a soldier in its defence. Our duty is still the same. We are not

indeed called to the same trials; but an inheritance so divine, and so dearly purchased, we are bound intrepidly to guard, and faithfully to transmit. No human consideration can warrant any thing like neutrality, when it is invaded. "He that is not for me is against me," are the express words of Christ. No middle way, my brethren. Open and avowed infidelity is nearly virtue compared to it. To think that we can acquit ourselves to God and his law, without opposing his enemies, is that monstrous compound of faith and apostacy, which drew from the prophet Elijah this bitter reproach to the Jews, "How long will you halt between two opinions? If the Lord be your God, follow him; if not follow Baal." To hesitate and hold back, when honour and conviction call aloud for a manly avowal of our sentiments, may accord with the political morality of the world; but there is a grandeur in the cause of God, that admits only of decided friends, or decided foes: the Christian who tamely permits religion to be reviled in his presence must be despised by the very reviler.

Zeal is not zeal, if it know any bounds at such a moment. Then it is that we should know no man, according to the world, or the flesh: forget friends and connexions, the rank, the titles, the authority of all who can presume in our presence to forget themselves. "The fool," says the Gospel, "should be treated according to his folly;" and the glory of the most high God promptly avenged for the outrage openly offered him by his vile creature.

Such is our indisputable duty. Of persons in the higher spheres of life, it is, if possible, more so; they see, too clearly, the happy or destructive influence of their manners and morals, not to be equally sensible that their countenance to religion is a tower of strength. Persons of inferior degree can do little comparative good or mischief by their example; withdrawn from the fixed attention of the world by the obscurity of their lot, whether they stand or fall, the consequence is, merely or nearly so, to themselves; they do but edify or infect, if I may say so, within the reach of their arms. But they, whom God has ranked high above the mul-

titude, become infallibly, either instruments to increase or to sap the stock of virtue and morality in the nation.

On the same principle, according as they are zealous or indifferent in the support of religion, shall the spirit that would overthrow it, unerringly, gain ground, or return abashed from whence it comes. Daily experience evinces that eminent piety can produce a degree of reserve in the most profligate and profane: what then must its power be, when joined to the imposing ascendancy of station? Yes, my brethren, one word, nay, one look of rebuke from the union of these distinctions, will often do more to check and arrest the audacious sallies of irreligion, than the most zealous efforts of Christians in inferior station. It is the nature of man to look up for his model; and the world besides makes it often so much his interest to please those above him, that he can assume, for that purpose, virtue to which he is a stranger, or even vices which he detests. To the ministry, above all, religion looks for the most strenuous support. If indifference in another Chris-

tian be criminal, as I have represented it; in men set apart to encounter every thing for its security and progress, it is surely the very last degree of guilt and baseness. 'Tis their's therefore, on all occasions, to stand forth and resist the enemy as a wall of brass. 'Tis their's, in and out of the temple of God, to prevent the ruin of the unwary and uninstructed, by boldly unmasking the imposture, and confounding it with its own portrait.

This, their superior information must enable them triumphantly to do. This ought to be their glory. For, if any thing under heaven can approach the human character to the divine, it is the laborious and unremitting dedication of life and talents to the diffusion of truth and virtue among men.

Thus it was, that even a layman of nearly our own time, the immortal author of the Rambler, accounted with God for the great powers he possessed, though not exempt from some weaknesses of this mortal state. What vice, what folly, did he not inexorably

lash? What liberty, the most distant, with sacred things, was he ever known to spare? Let the enemies of revelation, disconcerted by an instance too recent, too palpable to be controverted, of vast knowledge joined to the most zealous and submissive faith, attempt to blacken his great name with the reproach of superstition; I reply, even a glorious superstition, which seldom opened its lips, or put pen to paper, but to make infidels tremble, and support, with gigantic ability, the best interests of his country, and the world.

My brethren, I fear I am detaining you too long. On the occasion of your meeting I shall say little; the ground I took in this discourse was naturally suggested by it; and, though I am conscious of having treated it with much imperfection, I feel confident that the result of this hour will do honour to the public virtue of this nation. I should deem it the highest insult that could be offered to that sublime and universal feeling amongst you, did I labour to excite you in such a cause as the present. It is not, as on ordinary occasions, an appeal merely to your

mercy, or I should not hesitate to do so. The world and its passions, unhappily, raise too many obstacles to the full and perfect exercise of our duty to the wretched, not to require the utmost efforts in the ministry to enforce it. Though, I thank my God, that even to your eminence in mercy I am not a stranger; having, on more public occasions than one, in another country, beheld with my own eyes, yes, princely instances of that virtue in many distinguished personages of this. And I am sure that, as long as there remains on earth any reverence for all that is dignified and divine in human benevolence, the memory of the aid and protection you have afforded to the unfortunate victims of a memorable revolution, both clergy and laity, can never, never be effaced.

But, my brethren, great and prompt as your feelings of humanity may be, I invoke them not; I look up to a different principle; I commit the cause I have in hand singly to your patriotism. It is impossible you should love your country to the degree you have evinced you do, and not burn to pay the last and noblest sacrifice that man can

offer to it. If the memory of an Abercrombie can never perish in a British bosom; if all who have shed immortal lustre round the British name, whether in the command of your fleets or armies, be your idols and your boast, and every reward, every distinction, which a patriot Sovereign has conferred on them, find in your hearts the warmest sanction; — if the return of those brave troops, that fought and conquered in defence of every thing dear and sacred to you as freemen and Christians, be hailed throughout the nation with enthusiasm and rapture, and art set at work to immortalize their exploits; this day will be, can be no other, than a day of triumph to the proud and glorious calamity I bring before you; proud and glorious I call it, since it is all that is left of those who greatly perished in the same cause: the tenderest pledges of departed husbands and fathers, the merit of whose blood was, alas! the only inheritance they had to bequeath them.

Great God! what is there to be envied in wealth, if it be not the power to pour it out on such a cause! If, to pour it out in such a

cause be not the first of human enjoyments. Great wealth is often the lot of the vilest of mankind, as well as yours. It cannot, in itself, render any man truly respected, either alive or dead. It confers not one solitary talent, one solitary virtue. It is unequal to remove one pang from the heart; one ache from the tooth. It may roll through the public ways in gaudiest magnificence, yet sink at the same moment, under the collected scorn of beholders. The most studied, most luxurious gratifications it can purchase are rapid, and quickly forgotten, and in many, out of the four-and-twenty hours that constitute the day, namely, the hours of repose, place its possessor on a level with the most destitute of mortals. It leaves us at the approach of the grave. We view it on the bed of death with frozen indifference, or fruitless avidity; our heirs too often pant for our expiring breath, and, naked, we pass to the embrace of corruption, either woeful victims of perverted gifts, or confident aspirers to the promised and everlasting reward of the benevolent. Now, truly, my brethren, the prophet saith, "there is little judgment in the goings

of man." Imagination, that able impostor, walks him, in search of happiness, from chimera to chimera; the experience of every hour should cure his delusion; his delusion remains, in spite of experience: born to ambition, and the possession of infinite good, all his views, all his efforts are yet obstinately directed to deck the little span that intervenes between his cradle and his grave. Sorrow, and care, and miserable agitation, become the portion of his days on earth, merely to die overwhelmed with riches, or surrounded with splendor.

Rapidly, too rapidly, my brethren, does that period advance, that will display, in a faithful glass, what shadows we are, and what shadows we may have pursued. Nor does the great globe inherit one object that could afford us so much consolation at that tremendous moment, as the recollection of one cup of water given to a child of misery in the name of Christ.

Use, therefore, my brethren, the wealth with which God has so profusely blessed you, in a manner honourable to your reli-

gion, to human nature, and your country. Use it on this great occasion as you used it on a similar one; let the immense subscription that followed your everlasting triumph on the north seas, stand full in your recollection at this moment, soar as much higher as you will; but deep and eternal would be the ground of self-reproach did you meet the present claim on you with inferior souls.

I make no comparison between the different services. I believe I may say, without doubt, that Egypt was the grave of your enemies' hopes; that in Egypt you conquered peace, and laid the surest foundation for its permanence and stability, by giving to the world, after a contest of nine long years, unparalleled in the annals of time for the complexion of its efforts, the most impressive lesson it had received of the incalculable power, valor and energies of this nation.

I will trouble you no more; this is the first occasion of my life where the relief of misery was the question, which I deemed

it necessary to press on my hearers; a case, in its nature, so irresistible to British hearts, required it. Were my ability great as it is limited, I would not have been, I could not have been tempted to forget the respect due to such patriotism as yours. May the sanguine expectations it leads me to form, be more than realized, and the walls of this hallowed place, till they moulder into dust, call to the memory and veneration of men, the mighty tribute you will this day lay on the altar of public gratitude and virtue.

# SERMON VIII.

[For the Relief and Cure of diseased Children, and for Inoculation with the Cow Pox.]

ST. MARK viii. 36.

*What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?*

MY brethren, I come not here on this occasion to establish the right, or press the affecting title of the poor to your succour and protection, according to the means with which the peculiar favour of providence hath blessed you. It would be useless to dwell on a duty, which you already perfectly understand, and faithfully practise; or in other words to announce the great and eternal obligation of charity, to those whom charity incessantly assembles.

But, as unfortunately, much anxiety for the world is but too compatible with the ready exercise of that virtue; let me,

before I enter on the particular purpose of this meeting, crave the liberty to offer a few words on that most important of all considerations expressed in the text; for it is one, to which every man of common reflection, who believes in a state of future responsibility, ought frequently to direct his view. I am aware, that to urge the uncertainty of life, and certainty of judgment, as the strongest of all motives to reasonable thinking on the real value of all perishable things, the objects of human pride and ambition, is little suited to the habits and opinions of many nominal Christians; and that, even the majority of those who have not arrived at that degree of hardihood, which laughs equally at what reason or revelation says on the point, are yet so unaccountably deluded, as to entertain more than an hope of finding in the clemency of God, a positive security against the experience of that judgment.

Fatal and unsupported idea! that has gone, I am convinced, more than all other causes united, to render Christianity, what we too generally behold it this day, with

inconsiderable exceptions in any condition of life, or in any profession, sacred or otherwise, a system of easy accommodation with every object that selfishness grasps at, ambition climbs for, or invention has produced in the wide common of dissipation and folly.

And here, my brethren, let me put a question to your candor, though not immediately connected with my subject. Do you conceive, that the sacred season of Lent, a season consecrated by Jesus Christ to fasting, solitude and prayer, and peculiarly set apart to bring us back by the same means to the true standard of our calling, ought to have witnessed a species of public amusement, known by all experience to be of the most licentious tendency, and often fatal to the morals and innocence of youth, where under the mask of concealment, all distinction is levelled between pure and impure, and the ears of modesty securely assailed with language which it ought never to have heard, and may never forget?

Let it be remembered, however, and here I resume my subject, that whatever our habits, or opinions of divine placability may be, if the religion we profess be from God, it lies not with man to alter or modify an iota of its letter. Every thing human admits of change and vicissitude; states and empires, arts and sciences, customs and manners, laws and governments, feel, without ceasing, this inevitable principle acting upon them. God, from the throne of his immutability, sports with all the works and enterprises of man; and, willing to shew us the little value we should set on things perishable, has decreed that there should be nothing permanent on the face of the earth, but the very vicissitude that marks and agitates it.

But, in the midst of this scene of continual revolution, the scriptures remain unchangeable as the source from whence they spring; such as the first Christians received and understood them, such are they at this hour; and such will they be when the heaven and earth have passed

away. Neither the force or corruption of times can render them more austere, or more indulgent.

They form that everlasting and immutable system, announced in the revelation of Saint John, "And I saw another angel from the midst of the heavens, bearing in his hand the everlasting Gospel, to preach unto all who dwell upon the earth, and to every nation and kindred, and tongue and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory unto him, for his judgment is come."

My brethren, the true source of all our delusion is a false and deceitful security of life. Thousands pass their accounts around us and we are not instructed; some are struck in our very arms: our parents, our children, our friends, and yet we stand as if we had shot into the earth an eternal root. Even the most sudden transitions from life to dust, produce but a momentary impression on the dust that breathes. No examples, however awful, sink into the heart. Every instant we see health, youth,

beauty, titles, reputation, and fortune, disappear like a flash. Still do we pass gaily on, in the broad and flowery way, the same busy, thoughtless, and irreclaimable beings, panting for every pleasure as before, thirsting for riches and pre-eminence; rushing on the melancholy ruins of one another; intriguing for the employments of those whose ashes are scarce cold; nay often, I fear, keeping an eye on the very expiring, with the infamous view of seizing the earliest moment to solicit their spoils.

Great God! as if the all-devouring tomb, instead of solemnly pronouncing on the vanity of all human pursuits, on the contrary, emitted sparks to rekindle all our attachment to a perishable world! Let me suppose, my brethren, that the number of man's days were inscribed on his brow! Is it not clear that an awful certainty of that nature must necessarily beget the most profound and operative reflection? Would it be possible to banish, even for a moment, the fatal term from his reflection? The nearer he approached it, what an increase of

alarm? What an increase of light on the folly of every thing but immortal good! Would all his views and aspirings be confined, as they now are, to the little span that intervenes between his cradle and his grave; and care, and anxiety, and miserable agitation be his lot, merely to die overwhelmed with riches, and blazing with honours?

Had I, my brethren, such a register before me at this moment, with what an invincible effect should I not call those to mercy, who have perhaps but a year, perhaps a month, perhaps a week, perhaps a shorter interval, between them and judgment? And yet, unhappily, we experience, that knowledge as to the period of our dissolution, whose evident and indubitable tendency would be to suppress every inordinate passion, and render us melting as day to the necessities of our fellow creatures, changed into uncertainty, a circumstance far more alarming, since we are liable every moment to surprize, has a tendency directly the reverse; a tendency to feed and keep alive every foolish and

vicious affection; to embody every vision; to do away the most powerful of all incentives to mercy, and rock us into a profound and woeful security. In a word, because we are ignorant of that hour, which we yet know to be inevitable, we adopt the wretched and inconsiderate consolation of the rich man in the context; "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for we have laid up much goods for many years." But God said, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

I confess that, however unaccountable it may be, many a Christian is deluded to lose sight of the one thing needful. There is some allowance, perhaps, to be made for youth, that boiling season of life, when all the passions are impetuous, and the attractions of the world so intimately felt, and so naturally obeyed. But to see men, as they decline from their meridian, burning fiercer and fiercer for that world, shocking the wrinkles on their brow by an insatiable desire for more wealth and distinction; sacrificing their glorious reversionary hopes

for acquisitions and attainments, that are on the point of being torn from them; promising themselves a kind of immortality here, as long as they behold a single being one step nearer to the grave, is such an horrible perversion of reason and religion, as places it out of the ordinary exertion of the power of God to enlighten and save them.

This much we all know, that whatever length of days we promise ourselves, go we must; and, what is perhaps equally certain, at the moment we least expect it. Even examples of instant death in all the vigour of health, in the very bosom of security, are far from being uncommon. The scythe is suspended over our heads by a slender and imperceptible thread, which many causes, internal and external, often dissever, without allowing us a breath for recollection. But admitting that a misfortune so terrible is the lot of the fewer number, we are not, therefore, a whit more secure from surprize. There is not one individual in ten thousand, when obliged to lie down under illness, however alarm-

ing, who can bring himself to believe it will prove fatal.

No! wedded to this miserable scene of existence, our hopes are afloat to the last. The understanding, clear in every other point, casts not a ray on the nature of our condition, however desperate. Too frequently it happens, that every one around us at that aweful moment, conspires to uphold this state of delusion. They shudder for us in their hearts, yet talk to us of recovery with their lips, from a principle of mistaken, or, to give it its proper name, of barbarous lenity. The most important of all truths is with-held, till it is of little use to impart it. The consequence is obvious. We are surprised, fatally surprised. Our eyes are only opened when they are ready to close for ever. Perhaps an instant of reflection to be made the most of; perhaps to be divided between the disposition of worldly affairs and the business of eternity! An instant of reflection, Just God! to bewail an entire life of disorder! to inspire faith the most lively, hope the most firm, love the most pure! An instant of

reflection, perhaps for a sinner whom vice may have infected to the very marrow of his bones; when reason is half eclisped, and all the faculties palsied by the strong grasp of death. Oh, my brethren, terrible is the fate of those, who are only roused from a long and criminal security, by the sword of his divine justice already gleaming in their eyes. Remember, that if any truth in religion be more repeatedly pressed on us than another, it is this, that as we live, so shall we inevitably die. Few of us, I am sure, but live in the intention of throwing an interval of most serious reflection between the world and the grave. But let me warn you on that point, it is not given to man to bestow his heart and affection on the present scene, and recall them when he pleases. No; every hour will draw our chains closer. Those obstacles to better practice, which we find insuperable at this moment, will be more insuperable as we go on. It is the property of years to give wide and immoveable root to all passions. The deeper the bed of the torrent, the more impossible to change its course. The older and more inveterate a wound, the more

painful the remedy, and more desperate the cure.

You may judge how far any rooted vice will yield to age, by that propensity which age might naturally be expected to extinguish. Who ever knew a professed libertine, who grew not more scandalously unblushing and incorrigible in his decline; like those burning mountains, which contain within their bowels unextinguishable fires under crowns of snow. The extreme folly, therefore, of building on a future period, is clear and verified by a lamentable string of experience. But independent of this, how can we persuade ourselves that he, who expressly demands pure and voluntary sacrifices, will be satisfied with those that are made at last from mere terror and necessity? "You take," says the prophet Isaias, addressing himself to the worshippers of idols, "a cedar from the top of Lebanus, and devote the finest part of it to the ornament of your palaces, and not knowing what to do with the remainder, you shape it into a god." Precisely the case of many Christians, who, while

they devote the largest and most flourishing portion of their days to the indulgence of vice or folly, are mad enough to think, that no more is required to secure an eternal interest, than offering up to God the vile leavings of the world.

But if no danger is to be apprehended while the thunder of heaven rolls at a distance, believe me, when it collects over our heads, we may be fatally convinced, that a well-spent life is the only conductor that can avert the bolt. Let us reflect, that time waits for no man. Sleeping or waking, our days are on the wing. If we look to those that are past, they are but as a point. When I compare the present aspect of this city with that which it exhibited within the short space of my own residence, what does the result present, but the most melancholy proof of human instability? New characters in every scene, new events, new principles, new passions, a new creation insensibly arisen from the ashes of the old; which-ever side I look, the ravage of death has nearly renovated all. Scarcely do we look around us in life,

when our children are matured, and remind us of the grave; the great feature of all nature is rapidity of growth and declension. Ages are renewed, but the figure of the world passeth away. God only remains the same. The torrent that sweeps along, runs at the base of his immutability; and he sees, with indignation, wretched mortals, as they pass along, insulting him by the visionary hope of sharing that attribute which belongs to HIM alone.

It is to the incomprehensible oblivion of our mortality, that the world owes all its fascination. Observe for what man toils. Observe what it often costs him to become rich and great. Dismal vicissitudes of hope and disappointment. Often all that can degrade the dignity of his nature, and offend his God! Study the matter of the pedestal, and the instability of the statue. Scarce is it erected, scarce presented to the stare of the multitude, when death, starting like a massy fragment from the summit of a mountain, dashes the proud Colossus into dust. Where then is the promised fruit of all his toil? Where the

wretched and deluded being, who fondly promised himself that he had laid up much goods for many years? Gone, my brethren, to his account, a naked victim, trembling in the hands of the living God! Yes, my brethren, the final catastrophe of all human passions, is rapid as it is awful. Fancy yourselves on that bed from which you never shall arise, and the reflection will exhibit, like a true and faithful mirror, what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue. Happy they who meet that great, inevitable transition, full of days! Unhappy they who meet it but to tremble and despair! Then it is, that man learns wisdom, when too late. Then it is that every thing will forsake him but his virtues or his crimes. To him the world is past; dignities, honours, pleasure, glory: past like the cloud of the morning! nor could all that the great globe inherits, afford him. at that tremendous hour, as much consolation as the recollection of having given but one cup of cold water to a child of wretchedness, in the name of Jesus Christ!

I now turn to the purpose of our meet-

ing... When I consider the uncommon flow of mercy in this metropolis, the vast benefits it has produced, and is daily producing, that instead of being wasted by its profusions, it even grows under growing attempts to exhaust it; it is unnecessary to say, that I now call on you with confidence, in support of an object, perhaps, the most sacred and important in the whole possible embrace of that virtue, namely, the preservation of the life of man. Did I look to no more than the very auspice under which this institution presents itself to the religion and feelings of the public, it would be enough to impress me with the most exalted idea of its merits. But let the matter speak for itself, and prove, that amidst the many splendid and flourishing monuments of mercy established among us, there was still another wanting to vindicate, in the widest field, the providence of God in the relief and preservation of his creatures.

Most of those who hear me, may recollect the melancholy cause of the reform that has taken place in the hospital for foundlings.

Far be it from me to revive the memory of things, which, for the honor of human nature, ought to be covered with a veil of everlasting oblivion. This much however will I say, that as long as humanity holds a place in the human soul, or any interest is felt in the treatment or existence of these most wretched of all creatures, who are abandoned from the womb to the protection and commiseration of the community, the community should look up with unbounded reverence and gratitude, to those women of distinction, who, since the period of that reform, have assiduously visited and superintended that merciful institution in weekly rotation, as well as the man whose peculiar professional skill and experience in the treatment of diseased children, freely and indefatigably applied, has been the means of snatching thousands of those unhappy foundlings from death by inches.

My brethren, the institution for which I plead, is an emanation from that divine spirit of benevolence which saved the former. The vast harvest of life which followed from its vigilance and exertions, first sugges-

ted the idea of extending the same salvation through the metropolis and its environs. It was found impossible to reflect on the innumerable instances of infantine disease and death, that must necessarily take place in so vast a circle, without proposing the remedy to a public, whose heart and hand have ever been open to meet calamity of the lightest shade.

Accordingly, on the 25th March 1800, this institution arose, ardently countenanced by those exalted characters, who had seen and shuddered at its necessity, and since honored by the guardianship or special protection of her, whom the poor of this metropolis will remember, when her station and existence have passed away, whose advice, medicine and surgical assistance has since been administered without distinction or recommendation; and where such spectacles of disease and distortion have presented themselves, and presesented themselves in such swarms, as no eye could behold without astonishment, or human feeling witness without horror.

Receive not this as the language of exaggeration. If I speak to you with warmth on a subject fitted to inspire it in the coldest heart, facts, and nothing but facts, are my authority and my spur. What motive could I have in attempting to deceive? To enjoy the glory of a great result as a Christian, I ought to dread such a feeling; as a minister of the living God, I ought to despise it. To him alone be all honor and glory!

But your opinion of the inviolable truth and correctness of my statements is indispensably necessary to the success of my ministry, and consequently to the interests of my unfortunate fellow-creatures. And if I am to judge from the past, that opinion I trust you will, on the present occasion, entertain. Were it in the power of the man to whom I have alluded, and whose gratuitous attendance has been bestowed on this institution, from its foundation to the present hour, to bring before you the cases which his eyes have seen, and his skill and perseverance relieved, you would then see,

in its true colours, with all its afflicting circumstances, what an object you stand here to support.

Wide is the difference between the effect of description, and that of reality. The most glowing picture of human wretchedness is but a picture still; inevitably deficient in a thousand nameless points of appeal to commiseration; and when it is considered, that language has no terms on the subject, but what long and painful necessity has rendered familiar to every ear; manifest must the disadvantage be under which the pulpit labours on all occasions of this nature.

Perhaps the more novel and heart-breaking the case it has to represent, the more apprehension it has to entertain of failing in the execution, both from want of appropriate colours, and want of faith in its hearers. Nor do I conceive any thing absolutely less attainable in the function I exercise, than the power of bringing the conceptions of the happy and prosperous,

to the level of calamities that are out of common experience.

Alas, my brethren, there are many great, and many rich around me at this moment, who may possibly live in the practice of many virtues, and transcendently, of mercy, yet remain, to their dying day, with knowledge as imperfect of the true melancholy side of human nature, as if God had intended to spare them discoveries, that must necessarily go to disturb the tranquil enjoyment of the peculiar blessings he has conferred upon them.

Suffice it, my brethren, plainly to state that within the three years that constitute the age of this institution, no less a number than thirteen thousand eight hundred poor infants have been rescued by it, not merely from a state of extreme suffering, but the great majority from otherwise inevitable death; and thus restored to the bosoms of their disconsolate parents, who, whatever the rigour of their conditions may be, are equally alive with us to the feelings of nature, and even more affectingly con-

cerned in the preservation of their offspring, since to them alone they have to look, for the support of their age and alleviation of its infirmities.

Nor do I conclude in that number, astonishing as it is, multiplied cases, which could not, from their nature, be admitted to present themselves, in the common train, at the doors of the institution; namely, unfortunate mothers with their infants, victims of the vices of fathers, and literally I may say, falling to pieces, from the dreadful and neglected effects of a disorder, I shall not name; all of whom have been attended and supplied with the means of recovery at their homes, where recovery was possible.

Even numerous instances have occurred, where the criminal author of such calamity, sharing at the same time, the mercy extended to his innocent wife and child, has not only thereby been enabled, while under cure, to contribute to the support of a numerous family, by his industry within doors, who must otherwise have been cast out to beggary and ruin, but likewise been led by

the opportunity of reflection, on the sad consequences of his misconduct, constantly before his eyes, to the perfect reformation of a life of idleness, drunkeness and vice.

Let it further be observed, that did this institution barely go to prevent, in the rising generation, those shocking examples of distortion and deformity, so burdensome to the public, and so common among the poor, as to meet the eye and affect the feelings at every turn of our streets, that circumstance alone would be sufficient to ensure to it the support of every man with common humanity, or common regard to the good of the community.

But what an accession of strength must the appeal to you still receive, when you reflect on the almost incalculable effect in the preservation of life, of communicating, as this institution does, in the most extensive manner, the benefit of vaccine innoculation to the children of the poor, throughout the metropolis and its environs, besides transmitting, for the same purpose, the matter of this infection, in its most active and perfect

state, to the faculty of every town in the nation? As to its being an infallible preservative against that dreadful pestilence, the natural small-pox, which has so long thinned and afflicted the world, demonstration is the proof. For, in the whole experience of the institution, and the Foundling Hospital, in the course of which thousands and thousands have been innoculated, not one solitary example of the contrary has occurred, though every possible experiment has been made to establish the fact for the benefit of the community and mankind. Nay, such is the confidence and conviction of Mr. Creighton, the innoculator of immense numbers, that children have been laid, as he has expressly informed me, with perfect security, in the very bed with those who laboured under the confluent small-pox. It may be important here to observe, that the great discoverer, or, at least, introducer of this public blessing, relates several cases that took place long before its adoption in medical practice was dreamed of, and which, consequently, have the support of the most impartial testimony, where persons in the dairy counties of England, who contracted

the infection when young, by milking infected animals, were afterwards frequently exposed, without effect, to the contagion of the small-pox; the distance of time, as he says, between the first infection and the subsequent attempts to infect, being twenty, thirty, and even fifty years.

Of the state of this practice in England I need not speak, it being now universally recurred to, and all incredulity on that subject totally done away, as well from the candid of the whole faculty, as the most decisive and uninterrupted experience, of its efficacy. I even see, in the last report of the Jennerian Society, that so large a sum as two thousand four hundred and ninety-seven pounds has been already collected for its diffusion among the poor; nor can there, I trust under God, a reasonable doubt be entertained of the speedy and total extirpation in both countries, of a disorder, perhaps the most formidable, loathsome, and destructive that ever scourged the human race. It is impossible for me to lay down the precise number that perished annually by its ravages, in this city and

about it, as no bills of mortality appear: but when we consider, that much more than one half of its population consists of wretched families, confined to single rooms, consequently without the means of insulating infected persons, or, in other words, of preventing the spreading of contagion, whose vehicle is not merely contact, but likewise breath and effluvia, it is clear, that the fatality in that way must have been immense, as well as most deplorable in its circumstances.

Were I to strike an average from the little difference that has appeared in the opinions of those whom I have consulted, I should, I am sure, be much below the mark in stating it at six or seven thousand annually, within the metropolis and its environs alone. I leave you therefore to decide, my brethren, how far the certain remedy to such an evil, a remedy which God in his infinite goodness has revealed to the world, is entitled to your support.

On the various other effects of this great institution I have already sufficiently dwelt.

You will recall them. My task is now discharged. With respect to yours my mind is perfectly at rest. But, whatever the event may be, I confidently appeal to the inmost soul of every hearer in this place, whether, on a view of the whole case, a clearer or stronger claim to human mercy was ever preferred in or out of the temple of God.

To me it owes nothing but bare statement; nor, in the course of sixteen years experience, did I ever meet any occasion but this, where the simple subject superseded the necessity of attempting, or, more properly speaking, left me without power to convey the feeling it inspired. And if such has been (as I hope for divine favour) its absolute impression on me, what must it be on you, who are in the daily habits of giving much more substantial proof of what you can feel in the cause of wretchedness? And may this day exhibit a glorious proof, that though the lives of God's creatures are a consideration light as air, in the scale of restless and insatiable ambition, their preservation is yet the dearest and most sacred of

all objects to the heart of true religion and humanity!

And now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

# SERMON IX.

[For St. Werburg's Parish School, January 22, 1804.]

ROMANS, x. 2.

*For I bear record that they have the zeal of God.*

SUCH is the principle, my brethren, which religion displays in its true servants; such is the principle which at once shames our indifference, and spurs us to a noble and decided interest in the cause of God; such is the principle which laid the foundation and raised the superstructure of Christianity, that mighty colossus, which still rears its head amidst the ruins of empires, the revolution of ages, and torrent of human passions!

Zeal, the source of all elevation in heaven and earth! the crown and consummation of righteousness, the purest emanation of love! Zeal, that raises man above himself;

strips him of all fear; endues him with all courage; burns in his expressions, and sparkles in his life; bears him to his end with irresistible impetuosity; the scourge of impiety and disorder, the inflexible pillar of religion and virtue! Can a principle so sublime be compatible with the kindness of humanity?

Yes, my brethren, it formed the character of Saint Paul, the man chosen by God to waft his name to the extremities of the earth. Powerful in works and word, the living model of all Christian virtues, becoming all to all in order to gain all, full of bounty and tenderness to the weak, terrible to those whom no remonstrance could reclaim, without elevation in his intercourse with the simple and lowly, dignified and majestic before the great, capable of induring every thing for the faith, producing by bold and unslackened efforts the most astonishing revolutions in the minds and hearts of men, fulminating error at a time that it was sustained by all the various and fascinating superstition of idolatry, all the subtleties of a vain phi-

losophy, all the powers of eloquence, all the charms of poetry, all the force of prejudice and passion, all the might and authority of the Roman empire. What evils, what trials did he not encounter in the prosecution of his great design? Repeatedly journeying in the extreme rigour of seasons, traversing seas in the midst of furious tempests, traduced before tribunals, confined in the gloom of dungeons, scourged like the vilest malefactors; menaced with death in a thousand forms; at last sealing with his blood that glorious cause which his zeal had impelled him so gloriously to maintain!

During a course of several centuries the same spirit universally prevailed; from the noble matron and senator, down to the meanest slave. Zeal formed a chain, every link of which was equally bright and burnished. Every maxim and passion of the world which self-love had engendered, and ages consecrated, were rigidly banished from this extraordinary society of men; love and charity, the most unbounded, were its soul, patience and meekness its only strength,

poverty, abasement, and suffering, its only glory. From the bosom of God it cast an eye on the universe, of deep disdain, at the rapid wheel of all its enterprizes and allurements. The cruelty of tyrants became fatigued with endless victims, whose ashes emitted sparks to feed the eternal fire of zeal; and the conception of mankind stood still at the appearance of fidelity and virtue, morals and self-denial, above the level of humanity!

Such constancy prompted eagerness of inquiry into their source, and the result proved most glorious to the cause; its abashed enemies and persecutors yielded to the irresistible power of truth. Religion finally triumphed, and waved its banners on the ruins of idolatry; and the world, and the world's master bowed at once to the name of Christ!

Such are the recorded efforts of Christian zeal. I stop not to examine the causes of the succeeding, and too general declension from that great principle. It is enough for us to know that the misfortune exists.

Perhaps the destiny of the Christian world hangs this moment on the exercise of great virtues within the bosom of this single empire. Oh that it may be destined, in the designs of God, to stop the devouring course of ambition and its crimes, and cover the cause of religion, society, and human nature, with glory!

If we are sincere in our belief and profession of a divine religion, and well assured in its power of regulating the private and public duties of men, what motives have we not for zeal the most unbounded in its support?

Let us therefore earnestly invoke, and labour to acquire a distinction so affectingly called for, so powerful in its operation, and so inestimable, as you have seen, in its effects. But it will be necessary to distinguish and reflect on its true characteristicks, which I reduce to three. First, the perfect example of a Christian life; Secondly, the firm resistance of error; Thirdly, the instruction of the ignorant, but

particularly the young and friendless. On those I shall beg leave briefly to address you.

It is more than mockery, my brethren, particularly in these times, to make a parade of zeal or work, authority for the interest of religion and virtue; unless example shine in the van to prove our sincerity, nothing else can or will ever convince an ignorant and dissolute multitude, that in all our attempts to reform we are not merely playing off a political engine for private purposes.

Zeal without practice would nearly amount to saying to offenders, it is necessary that you should repress your passions; that you should serve God with fidelity and exactness; appear in his temples; bear his law in your hearts, and learn to know that an aweful responsibility awaits you, in order that those, who call themselves your betters, may with greater security enjoy the reign of profaneness, luxury, prodigality and vice. Men will invariably judge of

the tree by its fruits, nor ever be allured to duty by a zeal that carries with it its own refutation.

To authorize an enterprize, so sacred yet so delicate, as that of reforming others, it must be supported by a degree of regularity and merit, at least equal to that which we exact.

Many are the lessons which our blessed Lord has given us on this subject, but one remarkably strong, in the case of the woman taken in adultery; though her crime was manifest, and her punishment exactly laid down, it yet filled his just soul with indignation, to see men so criminal as the Pharisees, the slaves of every passion, under the mask of extraordinary zeal, standing forward, with clamour and eagerness, to avenge the violated law; he therefore answered them in a way not to palliate the offence, but, which strikingly conveyed the indispensable concomitant of true zeal; "Let the man who is without sin amongst you, cast the first stone at this unfortunate woman." A decision too pointed not to have a most apt and a

most humiliating effect; for, as the Evangelist reports, they retired one after another silent and confounded.

Hence it is that St. Paul exhorts all Christians to prove their zeal by their works; but peculiarly those who, being bound by special relations or engagements, to answer for the spiritual improvement of others, derive from thence a double and terrible obligation before God, of applying, above all things, to their own perfection, in order to render themselves capable of effectually discharging the higher duty imposed on them.

Thus, ministers of the Gospel, he declares, should be exempt from the very shadow of stain; lest profligates appeal from their instructions to their morals, and confound them with the reproach of, "Physician, heal thyself;" a reproach which, if founded, must strip them of all freedom of speech in the delivery of the word; or, to use the figure of Isaiah, reduce them to the condition of "dumb dogs in the house of the Lord," tolerating guilt, and trembling before

the guilty. It is true, that their function is independent of their moral character; and, according to the word of Christ, from the moment they are admitted to the chair of Moses, we are to receive what they teach with respect, without reflecting on what they do: but, as the generality of men are neither spiritual enough, nor equitable enough to make the distinction, they will easily pass from the contempt of the man, to the contempt of his doctrine.

There is in the human heart a certain perversity, or obstinancy, or pride, or call it what you will, that leads us to look with eagle eyes into the character of him who, under the appearance of zeal, assumes the liberty of controuling. If it stand not the test of such scrutiny, at least in material points, he will labour indeed to confirm and expose his own shame, but with respect to his object, he will beat the air.

It is precisely the folly which the Scripture has singled out as the most extravagant, that of building up with one hand, and throwing down with the other; not to

say, that the cause itself will thereby be exposed to more than dishonour: for such is the malignant ingenuity of unbelievers, ever watchful to thicken the veil over the destructive consequences of their own system, that, when they see among Christians so much degeneracy, such love of the world, such ardor for pleasure and all contemptible vanities, and, in many instances, open profligacy of manners, they eagerly take occasion from thence to revile and discredit religion, which, in the face of its boasted precepts and influence, can yet exhibit to the view of mankind the most scandalous fruits.

If there be any thing directly and unpardonably against reason and justice, it is this. For as the clearness of the source does not necessarily preserve the stream from contamination, neither can religion, however pure and celestial its laws and maxims, be secure in all cases, from violation. It is, alas! but too possible to believe in its truths, and occasionally tremble and hope, as we look to its judgments, or the glory of its rewards, while the weight of

nature, and the ardour of passion, confine us to a course of disorder.

But though to confound and identify religion with its abuse, be the most untenable and miserable of all imaginations, and therefore the clearest evidence of a bad cause, it is unfortunately too specious and plausible a thing not to be industriously employed to seduce the multitude, whose depravity, perhaps, more than their ignorance, leads them readily into the snare.

Nor are we without a fatal proof in another nation, that when the prevailing state of morals, in all orders, becomes such as to sink religion in the general respect and opinion, its enemies experience but a languid opposition to the complete accomplishment of its ruin.

Of all the pillars of society thrown down by the cruel and mighty arm of anarchy, the church and its altars are covered with most blood, and excite the least compassion and remorse. Nothing can, therefore, possibly assist us more in furthering the

progress of religion and virtue, than to support our zeal by personal righteousness. This it was that finally converted even the most furious persecutors of Christianity; and without this, did we possess all the gifts which the Apostle enumerates, miracles, tongues, philosophy, knowledge, wisdom, we should still want the testimony that honours our profession the most, and most proves it to be divine.

The next characteristic of true zeal, is, the firm resistance of error. I recollect the time when, in drawing the consequences of irreligion, I took my hints more from my own conceptions than from observation and experience; but I have beheld, with sorrow, those days dissappear, and give place to others, unfortunately, more guilty.

It is not my intention to dwell on points often brought before you, in this very place, by abler men. But if every colouring, every effort that indignant virtue and humanity could suggest, has already been employed to expose the direful conse-

quences that have flown from a new philosophy, you will admit, that God alone can coerce the licence of men, too numerous I fear, and in a rank of life that ought to induce some reserve, at least, under existing circumstances; who yet think, and speak, and dogmatize, and love to display their genius and talents, but to sap the foundation of religion. But this is not the hour I can select to do them the justice they deserve. May they live to regard, with horror, the praise and incense they receive from their deluded associates, and which they only owe to the gratitude of those passions, whose empire they toil to extend. May they live to know that system better, whose chief crime is, in their eyes, probably, the demand of too many virtues; and judge at last which of the two is more glorious, the zeal that labours to sanctify the earth, or the fiend-like occupation of seducing and perverting it.

For, my brethren, to recollect the words of the royal prophet, "I hate the congregation of evil-doers, and will not sit with the impious," it is too much the practice of

some Christians to depart from this wise maxim. That point, that raillery, which spares neither sacred nor profane, is too amusing, has too many charms to be excluded from the intercourse of life: nay, it is more than probable, that, did the Spirit of Darkness appear at this day, in the shape of a man of wit, that his sallies against the heaven he forfeited would be heard without abhorrence, nay, with applause and admiration.

Yet, my brethren, many a Christian, while admiring the brilliancy of the weapons which impiety employs, has sustained, without perceiving it, an incurable wound; like the deluded mariner, who, as fable reports, becoming all ear to the song of the syren, unhappily overlooked the gulph into which it was intended to allure him.

Firm principles of religion may defy the rude and direct assault of such men, as the noble and majestic oak defies the fury of the storm, but like it, too easily yields to the deep and insidious mine. Against the evil that stands confessed in all its native

deformity, we are naturally on our guard, and collect all our strength; but all the grace and inspirings of heaven would scarcely be sufficient to guard against the art, that steals us insensibly on to the precipice.

What at least can be the resource of youth, urged on, as it is, by the love of independence, and all the passions in their vigor, when thus exposed to such in the contempt of principles, that have scarcely taken root? The result is ruin. Religion is renounced in its dawn, and the school of darkness is recruited, from the very bosom of innocence and virtue.

If it be not possible in all cases to avoid sitting with the impious; we know what true zeal requires at our hands, not a timid or silent disapprobation of the assault against our principles, but a bold and manly defence of them, in the face of all consequences, and without respect of persons. Days have been, when not all the united powers of hell and earth could succeed in overwhelming it. The reason is obvious: because every Christian was then

a model of what he professed, and a lion in its defence: always ready, always panting for the occasion to confound its persecutors, by constancy in suffering, and perseverance in death.

The form but not the substance of our duty is changed; we are not called to the same trials; the blood and labour of our first brethren, cemented and raised the mighty structure of Christianity. But the inheritance we have received, we are bound, as far as we can, intrepidly to guard, and faithfully to transmit to our children. No human consideration can warrant any thing like parley with its enemies; any thing like connivance at the open or enveloped malignity of the impious. "He that is not with me is against me," are the express words of Jesus Christ. Our religion, like our sovereign and our country, demand we should take a generous and decided part in its support; no middle, no monstrous compound of loyalty and disaffection; scarce less criminal than open revolt, certainly more base.

The Christian, who tamely suffers his faith to be misrepresented or reviled, must be heartily despised by the reviler. Zeal is not zeal, if it flame not, if it know any bounds at such a moment; then it is, that we should regard no man, though entrenched up to the neck in all the trappings of human importance; forget friends and connections, and without distinction, all who persume to forget the reverence due to the sacred character we bear.

This is the indispensible duty of all Christians, but more especially of the great; they cannot be ignorant that their countenance of religion is a tower of strength; they know too well the happy or destructive influence of their moral character, not to be equally sensible, that, according as they are zealous, or otherwise, in the resistance of impiety, to that degree shall the detested principle decline or prosper.

Persons in an humbler sphere can do little comparative good or mischief, by their example; withdrawn from the fixed attention of the world, whether they stand or

fall, the consequence is nearly confined to themselves: they do but edify or infect, I may say, within the reach of their rooms: but from those, whom God has placed on the eminence, must the cause of religion or morals receive, in the very nature of things, its most operative support or deadliest wounds. Yes, my brethren, it is verified by all experience, that when the naturally imposing distinction of high rank is blended with the nobler distinction of acknowledged piety, one word, nay one look of rebuke from such a quarter, will do more to arrest the impudent and audacious sallies of impiety, than the utmost efforts of zeal in inferior Christians. It is the nature of man to look up for his model: and so imperious and indisputable is the sway of high example, that he will often counterfeit virtues to which he is a stranger, and vices which he detests.

To the ministry I need not appeal in this case; if indifference in other Christians would be criminal, as I have represented it, in men set apart to encounter every thing in the cause, it would be, in the last

degree, perfidy and guilt. It is theirs, on all occasions, to stand forward and resist impiety as a wall of brass. 'Tis their's, in and out of the temple of God, to prevent the ruin of the unwary and less instructed, by boldly unmasking the impositions that would delude them, and confounding them with their own portraits. This their superior information, or nature of their education must enable them triumphantly to do. This ought to be their glory: for if any thing under heaven can approach the human character to the divine, it is the dedication of life and talents to the diffusion of truth and virtue among men.

The third characteristic of true zeal is, the instruction of all ignorance, but peculiarly the young and friendless. To these I confine myself. It would be superfluous to dwell on the effects of such instruction. There is no point, of any interest to man, better ascertained, or more universally admitted, than the power of right and early culture, in forming his mind to every thing that is good and great. Even heathen republics have borne indubitable evidence,

that, by strict attention to this object, virtue the most rigid, as well as piety the most inviolable, can be the distinction of every citizen in a nation.

If cases too often occur amongst us, where the virtues implanted in infancy are effaced by the vices of youth; I will venture to affirm, that such misfortune is less the result of natural corruption or evil contagion than of education, falsely called Christian, in which every thing is more attended to than the main point: the superficial tincture of religion, and the virtues not employed as they ought. This has been long and notoriously the character of modern education, and, perhaps, the true source of all our degeneracy.

It is not pretended, that the very best and deepest impressions communicated at that season have infallible issues. For, there is no degree of Christian rectitude, that may not, in its conflict with sudden and extraordinary temptations, pay a tribute to human frailty; but the chance is immense, that the child, who is trained in the way he

should go, will not materially depart from it in a maturer age; or, if he should, that his recovery will nearly be as certain as his fall; like the bended tree, which flies vigorously back to its upright and natural position, when the force that restrained it is relaxed. Confirmed virtue, though it may yield to force or surprize of passion, will, when the moment of freedom and recollection comes, eagerly aspire to its former dignity and elevation.

Such is the invariable result of good principles, when once profoundly seated in the soul. To the victim of neglected education alone belongs that invulnerable peace, that hardihood in iniquity, to the last of which we have recently had the most affecting and shocking public examples in this metropolis; examples that proclaim, with miraculous organs, the mercy of mercies you are now assembled to exercise.

Far be it from me to depreciate past efforts in this cause. But, while the ministry have understanding to conceive, and zeal to feel all the present necessity of the object,

it is impossible they should cease crying aloud, for the revival of a principle that will give us to know, by personal experience, what sacrifices it is capable of.

Blessed be God, I already see the promise of such a principle. I see religion, in the better orders, beginning to wear its antient honours. I see, in general, amongst Christians, more seriousness of character, more respect for religious duties, more pride, more confidence in avowing their principles, and the influence of those principles on their manners and deportment. I see libertinism and impiety more abashed, and the mute eloquence of high examples drawing men, at this day, to the public worship of God, to whom the very way to his temples was unknown. I see magistracy, and all its authorities, laborious and vigilant to rescue the day of the Lord from wicked and scandalous profanation, and zealously striking at all sources of popular crimes and disorders.

In a word, my brethren, we have profited by calamity. The repeated pressure

of divine visitation hath forced even the most indifferent, perhaps numbers of the most dissolute, to serious reflection on a great interest. Marvellous are the mercies of God! and innumerable the ways of that mercy, in recalling his revolted creatures to a sense of what they owe him. Happy revolution! It gives me more than hope, that Christians will feel to the utmost, the unparalleled foundation they have for all that true zeal can achieve in this cause.

I decline the detail of them, as perhaps foreign from the pulpit. Too minutely, alas! are we all acquainted with those shocking and alarming contrasts to every virtue divine and human, which God has suffered in the bosom of our society for some years back, perhaps in views of mercy to the unborn; to say nothing of a recent paroxysm of most sanguinary folly displayed in the very seat of government.

But if ever humanity has led us to feel for a pure and friendless generation, if ever a faithful picture of its rights and woes, drawn from the chair of truth, hath proved

to ourselves and the wide world that we have hearts, the zeal of God will teach us more; it will teach us, that even life would be well bestowed to rescue innocence from the infection of the day in which it lives: it will lead us into the temple of God on those occasions, not with a passing sentiment of pity alone for the misery before us, but with a firm and steady eye to the general object of it; looking with such affliction as God himself might be supposed to look at the paramount want of our wretched people, and proving, by the sublimity of our efforts, our irrevocable conviction, that their instruction is the only remedy against evils that have nearly cut us out from the circle of Christianity and civilization, and justly rendered us the reproach of the world. Merciful God, why is it not given me to transfuse all I feel on this aweful subject! When shall the glorious sun of religion, nearly sunk beneath the horizon, by the degeneracy of uninstructed Christians, and the force of popular iniquity, again dart its rays from the meridian, to light our Israel in the long-forgotten paths of virtue and of peace! When

shall tranquillity not forced, and harmony, and order, and blessed brotherhood, and union, and willing submission to laws and authorities, and clear insight into the just and unavoidable inequalities of conditions, and universal sense of the various blessings to be enjoyed under the purest and mildest of all rule! In a word, the horror of all crimes, the knowledge of all virtues, gives a title to exclaim, as Balaam before the camp of the Israelites, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!"

This is the delectable sense, which deep and general sentiments of religion would produce; and which I am persuaded, as I am of my being, the very charity of the nation would, in a great degree, be competent to realize, and that at no distant period, were Christians influenced to great things by the true zeal of God.

Nay, had we no other spur in this cause, but our bare interest as citizens, there is no sacrifice under heaven, which it should not extort in times like the present; for better

were the return to a state of nature, than to live, or entail on our posterity the curse of living, as we do, trembling, divided, and unblest amid the ties and blessings of civilization and religion.

The energies prompted by public spirit and self-preservation may stop the torrent of crimes, and confine treason to its den; but the diffused knowledge and fear of God alone can strike at the source, and give universality to those virtues that ensure felicity to man and to society in this mortal state.

One word more, my brethren; I have appealed this day to a great Christian principle; and never, I can safely say, during a practice of seventeen years as an advocate of such objects, did I look with more confidence to the event. Let me further conjure you to reflect, that if the mighty and invincible arm of HIM, whose nod can resolve the universe into its elements, hath hitherto sensibly shielded us from a fate, which, your own reflections will more powerfully and feelingly represent than mine; even

one great evidence of your zeal in this cause would be of greater virtue in his sight, than all the solemnity of luxurious fastings and empty thanksgivings.

However allowable, and perhaps fruitful an appeal to your humanity would be, I look up to God, and decline it. The pulpit at this day cannot be too Christian. Not even the female portion of these infants, well acquainted as I am with their power to draw mercy in extraordinary profusion, shall tempt me to betray a distrust of your zeal, the only sentiment that can produce efforts proportioned to the present calamities of virtue and religion.

I should deem it, however, an unpardonable offence before God, did I quit this place, without mentioning a circumstance, probably unknown to many Christians who hear me; namely, that twenty male children before us, do not enjoy the full advantage of this institution; they are merely clothed and educated, not sheltered, not secluded from the evils of the day; not fed! If this unhappy distinction once pro-

duced in this very church a prompt and most merciful sense of it, why not again, why not now, that it is rendered doubly lamentable by the colour of the example abroad? Am I to consider myself precluded from deploring such an evil, because I once had the happiness of doing so, in this very place, with extraordinary success; since no human ability could devise any thing more calculated to act on Christians than the motives I have laid before you. If you would teach the pulpit more reserve, it must not be by a display of your virtues; the more evidence of that nature you afford, the more insatiable you will find its ministers.

As long as I possess the power of utterance, I shall conceive it a sacred duty to conjure attention to this case wherever I find it. What need I speak of the general inefficacy of instruction unaccompanied by seclusion from bad example? It is precisely, as I said before, throwing down with one hand what we build with the other. It is paying a price for the most afflicting experience. It is merely taking pains to render the

perversion of children the more opprobrious to religion, and more dangerous to the community, by the lights they receive. It is justifying the objections that are made against the rational growth of the poorer classes, by communicating the talent of reading, without the only security that can exist against its abuse.

But what need I say more on this point? There never can be one reasonable hope entertained of a child passing daily, with any thing like safety, even from the best lessons of piety and morals, into the bosom of example, perhaps, the most infernal. The very care that we take, or confess that we ought to take, in cutting off our own children from all intercourse with the profligate, is a proof that our conviction on the subject is decided. Shall we not then, my brethren, shall an assembly so vast, so equal to great efforts, not provide against an extremity so fatal? Shall these unhappy boys merely be brought to droop at the view of a blessing not destined for them; confined, like criminals, to the porch of the temple? Shall the zeal of God not give

them entrance into the sanctuary? It is but one noble and true Christian exertion, and you seal the present, probably the everlasting happiness of creatures already half within your bosoms. It is not to their natural protectors, that is, the inhabitants of this parish, I would be thought peculiarly to address myself, but to all good and feeling Christians before me. Every difference of obligation is lost in the magnitude of the case. I have sometimes, I confess, felt shy, if I may use the term, in recommending additional burdens in poor parishes; but I have sometimes done so, and multitudes instantly pushed forward to undertake them; and all dread of persevering support from the public was refuted by the event. But this is the day of superior virtues, as it is, unfortunately, of superior crimes: and it would be the last insult I could offer to the zeal of Christians, not to exact, were it necessary, the humblest mite in support of a divine religion; and, I might almost say, its diviner consequences.

I leave you, my brethren. Remember the general object. Remember, these fe-

male innocents. Remember peculiarly the case of these unhappy boys. And may I be greatly justified, at the expiration of this hour, in saying with the Apostle, "I bear record that they have the zeal of God."

And now to God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

# SERMON X.

[For the Poor Children of the Parish of St. Nicholas Without.]

PSALM, XVIII. V. 30.

*As for God his way is perfect: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.*

I MUST be dead to every great and sublime emotion, if the prospect that meets my eye at this moment were incapable of exciting such a sentiment in my soul; if I could look round me in this church, and behold so vast a multitude of every sex and condition voluntarily assembled and confounded before the face of the most high God; and not glory in the triumph of religion, over the powers of darkness and spirit of the world.

Oh, my friends, what an incontestable evidence do you this day afford, that a respect for heaven is at bottom, at least the ruling principle in every heart; that

though the world and its cares may agitate and engross us, though passion may bow us down to a variety of idols, still a proud hour will sometimes proclaim that virtue alone is amiable, and God alone is great.

My friends, I have many, and, as I conceive, serious and important considerations, to press on you; and most solemnly do I declare, that if ever, at any instant of my life, I have regretted the want of superior powers, if ever I have panted to possess that ardent and victorious language, which penetrates and inflames the heart, it is at the moment I stand before you; it is now when every hour seems more and more to point out the necessity, manifest as it is awful, of improving our title to the divine protection.

My design is not to animate your patriotism; nor is it perhaps in strictness the province of the ministry: be that as it may, the task happily is unnecessary; were the case otherwise, I certainly should not hesitate a moment to use every effort of my soul, in strengthening and exciting such a

sentiment among you. Happily, however the case is otherwise, it is not necessary; your attachment to the common cause is fervent and unquestionable, and I trust universal, from the cottage to the throne: or if I am deceived, if it were possible there could lurk, at this awful crisis, under the present aspect of things, any remnant of treason or disaffection, thank God it is doomed to droop its head; doomed to behold a spirit that speaks daggers to its hopes, and like spots on the glorious disc of the sun, to be overwhelmed in a wide and extended blaze of loyalty and public virtue.

Basely insensible and undeserving, would we be indeed of all the blessings we enjoy, if every object that is loved and revered by man, his domestic peace, his freedom, his altars, his country, his prince, would not rally us around them in the moment of their danger; or if one common impulse of horror were not sufficient to nerve every arm, when refiners on all cruelty, and harbingers of all chaos would add us to the train of their innumerable victims.

No! not to glow and unite on such ground is surely out of nature. Did we live under the most abominable despotism that ever set its foot on the neck of a people, instead of the mildest and wisest of all systems, who would exchange his lot, bitter as it was, for an eternity of such liberty as turns man into monster?

But I am going out of my course, all I will say farther on the truly noble and heroic ardor you display at this portentous crisis is, that if the arm of flesh would protect you without God, you stand upon a rock, which a bloody and ferocious horde might assail without impression; depend on it however, if there is any truth under the sun better confirmed than all others, it is this, that there sits enthroned on the top of all creation, a tremendously jealous, and inscrutably overruling Being, who sports with the best concerted enterprizes of man; whose invisible agency determines the issue of all human events; who has often proved, that he can be weary of long patience; and who is terrible

when he awakes to scatter judgments and afflictions over a guilty world.

Now then is our time to conciliate him, while, I may say, he seems to waver; while yet he seems to view us with predominating tenderness! Now is our time to humble ourselves to the dust before him; to avow and deplore our many and grievous offences, and adopt a resolution that may eventually avert the calamities of a nation.

Let us not flatter ourselves with the unconditional hope of one moment's security. The records of our religion, and the whole history of man are against us. Though every being in the nation possessed the nerve and daring of an Achilles, and were equally invulnerable, our efforts would be vain, should Heaven mark us out as the victims of its insulted justice.

Beware then, lest "*a scourge come upon you, mighty and without number; whose teeth are as the teeth of a lion; a fire devoureth be-*

*fore them, and a flame burneth after them. Your land is now as the garden of Eden, and behind them it shall become as a desolate wilderness.*" Too exact a portrait is this of the demons you have to deal with; and such was, in part, the aweful admonition which a merciful and long-suffering Father addressed to Israel, when the cup of its iniquities was full, and the example of vice and irreligion in the great came to countenance and uphold the abominations of the people.

Let us then, I repeat, for the last time, honestly take ourselves to account; honestly lay our hands to our bosoms, and ask these, how far we have deserved the divine protection against the demons that are abroad; and by what means, and what means alone, we may effectually insure it? This is the business to which I would lead you, and which shall constitute the sequel of this discourse.

If I did not go into the proofs of an all-controuling Providence; if I did not shew that it is founded on the first principles of

reason; nor have brought forward, in support of it, that vast and mournful body of evidence which the Scriptures and all history afford, it is because a most able effort from this pulpit has precluded the necessity of my doing so. I allude to a sermon preached before you on the 8th of January, and which you all have, or ought at least to have, in your hands.

I shall, for the sake of order, divide what I have to speak of into heads: First, the growing disposition to infidelity among men; Secondly, the equally manifest decay of piety and morals among those who still profess to believe. I trust, however foreign the description of such matters may appear to the particular object for which we are assembled, it will tend, notwithstanding, strongly to promote it. You are fatigued by constant appeals to your compassion; most intimately persuaded am I, that the cause of popular education in this country will never thoroughly prosper unless by strenuous and unceasing efforts of the ministry, to light up the flame of true religion in your souls.

Constitutional sensibility you have, and when properly excited, it does much; but to reckon on a sentiment, which every object you pursue is up in arms to keep down, and consequently, which can emit no abundance of sparks, unless it be inflamed and assaulted like a bar of iron in a forge. No, it is a forlorn hope; but give me to see you once raised to the glorious distinction of Christians, trampling on the world and its allurements; joining to the force of nature, the love and dread of your God; impressed with a conviction of future responsibility: then, and only then, will I say to the friendless orphans of this nation, your Messiah is come.

First then, I ask if it can be doubted, that the mortal poison of infidelity is rapidly gaining ground? Can it be doubted, that the most sacred truths of Christianity are, in too many instances, scouted without reserve, and delivered over to scorn? Is there scarcely a young man, at the present day, in that class of the world which is honoured with the name of fashionable, who professes to believe any thing on the

score of religion? Is it not too much the reigning tone among men, to rise superior to the weakness and simplicity of believing Christians?

What minister of religion can now venture to preach on the subject of our holy mysteries, or enforce their divine authority, without exciting a philosophic smile in these children of light? Who shall even glance at the doctrine of eternal punishment, or of future punishment at all, without being openly pitied for his credulity, or secretly arraigned for hypocrisy?

Is it not this predominating character of the day that has forced, in a manner, the pulpit, in spite of itself, to slur over the awful and tremendous in religion, and recur to topics as suited to the portico, as to the temple of Jesus Christ? What does there too generally appear to be left of religion among many men, but a sentiment common to enlightened heathens, namely, a political respect for its influence in restraining the vulgar? And how soon might it expire under open insult and contempt,

if, like oil on troubled waters, it did not help to promote the tranquillity of the commonwealth?

How many among us who most cordially detest the political principles of Paine, are as cordially with him in every line of his Age of Reason? And perhaps, were we to take the trouble to ascertain which had been read most, that blasphemous attack on Revelation, or the masterly refutation of it by a Christian prelate, it would be found, that the one had been generally and greedily devoured, while the other was scarcely known, or cast aside with contempt.

That there are men who, raging to pull down the venerable temple of our constitution, and erect on its ruins the bloody standard of French liberty, have recurred to infidelity as one of the engines, is clear; since it is well known with what indefatigable industry, the very worst species of it has been diffused among the people in the circulation of the work I have alluded to, which was sold and dispersed through the

provinces in editions so cheap as a penny a book.

Need I mention that execrable society which existed in the very heart of the metropolis, in the year ninety-five, in which open and avowed treason against the state was supported by such language against heaven and religion, as can scarcely be conceived possible in any extremity of mental delirium, and certainly not thought of without a feeling of unutterable horror?

I say nothing on this head but what the public are in possession of from the evidence and confession of those deluded young men. But, Great God, from whence arises that almost general, if not equal propensity to detract from the principles of Christianity in those who are not blinded and impelled by the same furious motives?

Christianity, the source of every private and public virtue, and, if it be not a fable, so absolutely decisive of our destiny for ever! Surely on a point so important, it is

wisdom to use some caution and deliberation, to look before we venture on so dangerous a leap!

But to reject truths of the strongest evidence, merely for the glory of rejecting them; to reject without inquiry a system, which, like a rock in the midst of the deep, has stood the beat of all tempests and torrent of ages; or to use no other arms against it but a set of common-place worn out difficulties, that tremble from old age and caducity, a thousand times advanced, and a thousand times refuted; not to be able to support the infidelity they adopt, or prove the falsehood of the faith they abjure: and in this state of shameful inconsistency, yet pretended conviction, gaily and proudly to advance on a tremendous eternity!

If such be the mark of superior understanding, or even of common sense, then I wish to be informed what it is that constitutes imbecility or phrenzy?

My friends, the great source of infidelity

is not in the understanding of man, it is in the pride and corruption of his heart: well has the prophet compared the impious man to a tempestuous sea, which, tormented by the winds, vomits upon its shore a tide of slime and impurity. Be not surprized at the boldnes of the metaphor. It is exactly applicable to those geniuses who make the sacred objects of our belief the but of their ridicule and scorn.

This is not an occasion on which I can collect and display the proofs that support revelation; but show me a man, whose moral character evinces that he has no interest in decrying them; who, perfectly divested of pride, prejudice, and passion, will carefully examine them; will trace, and when he has traced them, will candidly acknowledge the exact and most literal accomplishment of the scripture prophecies, that invincible stumbling block in the way of all objectors to Christianity; will admit that its original establishment in the face of all human opposition is any evidence of divine original; that certitude, moral and historical, and facts the most palpable, are a

test of truth in any cause whatsoever; that the assent of the most virtuous and enlightened men in every age of the Christian world, down to the present hour, carries any weight with it: that our religion, if false, could have still kept its ground in so many nations of the earth, amidst the increase of human knowledge, and unceasing variation of all human things; and after such an inquiry, and such acknowledgements, will still persist in unbelieving; I will then confess that real and deliberate incredulity is not a chimera.

But I am bold to say, that such an example will never be found; or if ever it should, it will be a singularity not to be accounted for on any known principle of the human mind, and, therefore, would make nothing against the natural strength of the argument.

No, it is invariably the passions of men that impel them to throw aside the yoke of religion; of men whose open and declared profligacy of manners, haunted by the spectre of future retribution, is not the

spring of their revolt; no, it is pride, it is the vanity of rising superior to received opinions, of being thought wiser and more intelligent than the multitude, whom they would represent as dragging their steps amidst a night of prejudices; following their teachers with an abashed head, and equally born to creep under the tyrants of their reason, as under those of their liberty.

Consequently we see religion attacked, not by argument, but by sophistry, misrepresentations, wit, irony, ridicule, apocryphal anecdotes, vain and puerile declamations, and all such arts as impose on the understanding, and carry away the suffrage of superficial hearers, who never fail to think themselves convinced, when they are delighted and amused.

Press, however, those hearers of impiety with any thing like argument, offer them the gauntlet of serious discussion, and they are dumb; or the most you can draw from them is a lame attempt to cover the weakness of human reason in a bad cause, or

sometimes a mysterious insinuation, that they know much more on the subject than they think it right or prudent to express.

There is no man acquainted with the world, who must not often have witnessed this. What a race of impostors, what a curious system that would enlighten mankind, while it dreads to be enlightened? that is supposed to be the work of reason, while it shrinks from all reasoning? and that impudently shouts victory, while it shrinks from the combat? And yet such, and such only, are the triumphs of infidelity ancient and modern! A miserable empty reed dashing against a colossus.

Look into the most celebrated writers of that cast, and what trace do you find of a dispassionate inquiry after truth; or what do they present to the world but masterpieces of impiety, in which the sacred and the profane, truth and calumny, fable and true history, eulogium and satire, reason and pleasantry, united and confounded together in their march, seem to dispute

the glory of charming and seducing the reader, like those inchanted labyrinths in which every way attracts, and every way misleads.

Such are the works of Bayle, such of Voltaire, of Rousseau, and many others I could mention; men gifted by heaven with every talent, but seduced by the pride of human reason and lust of false glory, to employ them in the most abominable of all purposes; perhaps it would be impossible to calculate the extent of the mischief they have produced throughout the Christian world.

In the first ages of Christianity you behold the fruits of perfect and universal submission to the principles of Christianity, in a society of men affording the example of every virtue that insures the happiness of individuals and tranquillity of states. But since the growth of infidelity, Great God, what a torrent of corruption! What inquietude in the spirit of man! What theories! What systems destructive of all

public felicity? What abominations? What crimes? What a full evidence of this has been given to the world?

Oh divine religion! let thy ministers be silent; thou standest not in need of their assistance, thy cause is at last become the cause of all society, the delusion is dissipated, every eye is opened, impiety is at length wounded with its own sting, it is betrayed by its own excesses, it is even terrified at the horrors it has occasioned! May we profit, my friends, by the aweful lesson! May religion resume a glorious empire among us! the protection of heaven be assured, and this island be happy!

I come now to the second head of my appeal to you. Perhaps, of the two, it is much less injurious to God, to spurn his revelation as an imposition on the human understanding, and unnatural restraint on human passions, than to confess he has revealed a law, and yet live in daring violation of every rule it prescribes for the regulation of our conduct. But I appeal to your

own breasts (and this is certainly not a time to cast a veil over the truth), how far the generality of Christians may, with justice, be accused of dishonouring their profession, or whether it would be exaggeration in me to assert, that the day never existed when fervor in religious practice was less known, and the example of vice and every species of dissipation more notorious, consequently more ruinous. I say ruinous, for who is unacquainted with the influence of example on the morals of youth? Example is omnipotent in vice or virtue.

Our first father, though born without original stain, could not resist the example of the first crime; we are imitative creatures, more exactly poised in our inclination to good and evil, than is imagined by those who judge more severely of human nature. It is the weight, the preponderance of example on one side or the other, that invariably determines the first bent of our lives; it is impossible, at certain years, to resist the power of repeated impressions.

Hence it is, that we see the sacred prin-

ciples of education rapidly hunted down, and dropping like the buds of blasted vegetation. Thus the man, who would have stood firm against the force of his own passions, yields to that body of vice, which he sees not only tolerated and excused, but nearly consecrated and commanded. Thus the woman, who came pure from the plastic hand of education, with all the graces of modesty blooming in her mien, and all the virtues of religion shining in her deportment, is so quickly hurried down the silver-tide of fashion, that it is just to say, that she becomes radically tainted with pride, vanity, and folly, and affectation, drops that diffidence, which is certainly the most captivating feature of the sex, becomes bold, staring, masculine, and assured, passes her whole life in the oblivion of all that is serious; never bestows a thought on God, or her duty, and, to speak more truly, adores nothing but herself.

This is the notorious and too melancholy effect of example. The youthful character presents itself, like flaming wax, to the seal of the day, and takes an impression that

becomes hardened and durable. The necessity of doing as other people do, and the dread of ridicule, have plunged thousands into a course of life which their understandings have reprobated and their hearts abhorred; and as well might we expect to mock the ordeal of fire and water, as associate in the season of youth with a corrupt generation, and preserve for any time even the appearance of religion and virtue.

"With the pure," says David, "thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward." Let it specially be observed, that bad example, when exhibited by the higher orders of life, is an evil most extensively fatal and pernicious; the vulgar or obscure can do but little comparative mischief in this way; withdrawn from attention by the humility of their lot, the eye of God is the chief witness of their ways; whether they stand or fall, the consequence is chiefly to themselves: suppose them covered with the vilest offences, they would but infect within the sphere of their contracted intercourse.

But those among you, my friends, whom God has raised high above the multitude, what a blessing or a curse has he decreed you to be? You cannot perish alone. Like the beast in the Apocalypse, which falling from the heavens, dragged the stars into the abyss, to your perdition is attached the perdition of thousands. It is not only in the bosom of your families, or intercourse with each other, that you save or destroy. No! your morals (whatever they are) become necessarily the morals of the whole public: your example becomes a standing rule, either an instrument to promote, or a poison to sap the stock of virtue in the nation.

It is impossible you can go astray, as to the general tenor of your lives, unknown to the world; like a torch in the midst of the night, you are distinguished by the lustre you emit: your inferiors take a vanity in walking in your steps; you stamp on licentiousness an air of nobility and fine taste, which they cannot resist; every graft that you lay on the simplicity and innocence of antient manners is infallibly spread.

From you the present reigning indecency of female dress; from you the artificial blush which dishonours the human countenance; from you the increasing rage for play, and the highest play; from you a prevailing latitude of conversation on certain topics, which Christian delicacy revolts at; from you the too manifest, and too general con empt for even the externals of religion.

For instance, as to this point: I speak to you now in the holy time of Lent. Great God, how is it prophaned by all, from the highest to the lowest? Is there any mark of peculiar fervor and restraint at this time, (passed by our divine Saviour in fasting, solitude and prayer), but with us, I may say, in uncommon revelry: as if we selected this period for the impious purpose of insulting the example and deriding the sufferings of him who redeemed us.

The very enemies of the Christian name read us a lesson on this head, that ought to cover us with deepest confusion; every thing announces among them, at the period of their Ramezan, repentance, expiation, atone-

ment, before the face of the most high God! Against the slightest transgressors, their law pronounces a penalty: against the more scandalous, death.

Such are the disciples of a false prophet; and in the bosom of Christianity, amidst a chosen and a cherished race, the beloved of God, and redeemed by his blessed Son! the only spectacle that attends a sacred obligation is the multitude of those that spurn and despise it!

Again we are commanded, "to keep holy the sabbath day." I challenge any impartial man to say, whether, in the very worst state of relaxation to which religion can be supposed to arrive, it would be possible almost to imagine more various abuse of that day than our community affords. I am unwilling to enter into particulars: nor perhaps would it be prudent to do so on the present occasion. Surely one should think that six days in the week are long enough, in all conscience, for the work of offence and dissipation; why do we pursue and assault our religion, in her last entrenchment?

Why are we continually innovating on the oldest establishment of vice?

Are we never to be glutted with the world? Is there no luxury in breathing from unnatural repletion? at least I may be allowed to say, that cards, assemblies, and play on the sabbath of the Lord our God, is an abominable profanation; cards that on every day are a mine of offence, no longer an occasional amusement, but a settled profession; a sharping resource; the very business of our lives; over which avarice itself is seen to slumber from perfect lassitude.

Inconceiveable passion! Why do not the ministers of religion devote the evening of this sacred day to such an employment? No, the world would exclaim against them. I dare assert there never was, or never will be, so direct and shameful a prostitution of their sacred function. No; the world would be the very first to proclaim it as an argument in defence of its own profanation.

And have you less to fear on the subject of futurity than we have? If we have all

equally the same law to abide by, depend upon it, that according to our transgressions, we shall experience the same judgments, and be involved in the same common ruin. Alas, my friends, whence can it be that all the admonitions we receive on this and every other point of Christian duty, appear absolutely without effect?

Year after year, and day after day, they are impressed on us. We are certainly appealed to with much fervor and much assiduity. The ambassadors of God cry aloud to us in his temples, and his word is in our hands. Every consequence, temporal and eternal, is brought to stare us in the face. Still our train of life continues obstinately the same. No deep sensibility to reproof, no fixed determination to lay the axe to the root of any one single passion or abuse!

Oh! how afflicting must this be to the hearts of those, who are appointed by heaven to hunger and thirst for your salvation! Grant us at least the happiness, at this awful crisis, threatened, as our country

still is, by a dreadful visitation, to find that we make some impression on you. Oh what have we yet done to conciliate our God! Yes, we have assembled on a solemn day to repent with our lips. But repentance would have fruits. St. John, on the banks of the Jordan, preached not the parade, but the fruits of repentance. "Bring forth," said he, "fruits worthy of repentance;" if you have two coats, give one to him who hath none. Lay the axe at once to the root of the tree; that is, pronounce an eternal and radical divorce from your vices and passions, and become shining examples of every human virtue. This is what we are now called to. What a mockery is it to look for divine protection in this world, or mercy in the next, on any other terms?

You yourselves would regard me, at this instant, as the vilest apostate from my duty, did I hold a different language to you. And yet what you would receive from my lips with indignation and horror, is the very doctrine you cherish in your hearts, and proclaim in your conduct.

What inconsistency! Hear then this solemn truth, and though the grave threw up the dead to controvert it, they would deceive you: While the Lord looketh down from the heighth of his sanctuary, and beholdeth the greatest excesses authorised and diffused by the greatest examples; a monstrous sytem of luxury increasing the public misery; a principle of false honour shedding blood without authority or remorse; children taught every thing but the science of salvation; a vile and perishable interest the god of all stations; and Christianity, from universal degeneracy of its professors, the laughing-stock of philosophers and unbelievers.

That is ground, not for confidence, but to tremble; to tremble every instant, lest the cup of his fury be poured upon us, the sword of an enemy be a scourge of his appointment. Can we deem ourselves, in such a case, less criminal in his sight, than that impious generation which, in an early age of the world, he repented having made, and resolved to exterminate?

I have no difficulty in saying, that we are more so, because the law of grace, consecrating us more specially to God; giving us a more intimate communication with God; causing us, in a degree, to participate the very nature of God, our transgressions, supposing them to be inferior in themselves, take from thence a deeper colour of enormity, and consequently cry louder for his vengeance. Incurable must our infatuation be, if we see not this instant, the way we should pursue.

Is it when the decree of our chastisement may have passed, when the heart of our God is steeled against us; when we are delivered over to the sons of Amalec, and the land we inhabit is polluted by infidels, and ravaged by furies; when every object for which we breathe is swept away, like a dream; and we are cast forth on the wide earth, a proscribed, wandering, and mendicant race?

Is it then we shall raise our hands to a long-forgotten Father? Oh, it would be

vain! No; you had Moses and the prophets, and you heard them not. Remember it is written, that the Lord hath established a time for mercy, and a time for vengeance; and mocketh that repentance which is the effect of force and necessity. I should never draw to a conclusion, were I to say all that my heart suggests. From the very bottom of it have I spoken to you. What interest have I in your temporal or eternal fate, but what is given to me from God? If I am enflamed for either, what other principle can inflame me?

If you can be insensible to the only infallible means of conciliating the divine protection to our common country, what might not the case be with me, in the common order of human feelings? With me, who am but an atom on the surface, and would find a resting-place wherever I was blown.

Or, if you can look to the great day of your eternal account without fear and trembling, what affair would that be of

mine, did I not view you with other eyes than one man views another?

Reflect then on the warning you have received, for it hath a character you ought to distinguish and feel. Reflect on that warning; for I am the minister of God, and it is not mine. The time may come, when the greatest on this earth shall be humbled and let down; melancholy evidence that nothing is stable and immutable but God! may, with tears in their eyes, and sorrow in their hearts, say, even to me, Oh, that our unhappy nation had attended to such counsel as you once addressed to us!

To the high and the low, the rich and the poor, those in authority, those out of authority, ministers of heaven, parents and children, Christians all, here it is; serve God, and cause him to be served. No detail could tell you more. To your mercy I commit the portion of innocence and wretchedness before you. Had I kept them in your attention through the whole

of this discourse, I could not have served them better, than by the line I pursued: I know it, I feel it. I will pledge my life, my eternity, the event will prove it, whatever appearance may be against me.

Resolve from this hour, as far as in you lies, that the iniquities of the people shall cease with your own; edify them by your example; enlighten them by early instruction. The mute eloquence of Christian life in their superiors is a more powerful instrument in reclaiming the adult generation, than all the efforts of their priests or ministers.

But what might not the ministry effect, when fortified by such assistance? What weight, what authority would it not extend to the truths which we announce to them? what confidence to our zeal? what credit to our censures? what consolation to our labours? In pointing to those above them, the appeal would be decisive and unanswerable.

I will venture to say, if the upper and

middling orders lived as they ought, there would be little iniquity in the multitude. Even one great example in a kingdom is a treasure to the cause of religion and virtue. Mattathias alone stemmed the torrent of abomination in Juda. To the influence of your personal conduct, join early instruction. Let seminaries of education flourish. Strike at the root of popular misery and popular disorder. You know what you have done in this way. *Think* you have done nothing, while any thing remains to be done.

The appeal in this cause has been almost exclusively to your feelings as men, and a prolific source it must be confessed; but the times seriously and awfully warn you to act in another capacity. Regenerated to God, your fruits will be invariable and immense, your efforts in this cause will know no bounds; you yourselves will be the first to pronounce that superabundance of property as accursed, which is turned to a less sacred purpose, than that of promoting the designs of providence, strengthening the bonds of society, and distributing,

I may say here below, crowns of immortality to your fellow-creatures!

Oh, how all the vain magnificence of the world sinks before the glory of such works! To your mercy I commit those unprotected objects of commiseration. I know what has happened in the course of last week; it was early announced to me in the stillnes and tranquillity of my solitude, looking forward with the liveliest hope. Whatever has the most distant colour of disaster, and thank God, that to every man who does not purposely represent it otherwise, it is but a colour, is rapidly conveyed. I was even earnestly entreated, I was implored to defer this appeal to you; I was told that it must necessarily fail; that, not a being would attend us; that I ought to prepare myself to see those children abandoned! No; I looked up to God, and determined to go on. The appearance before me evinces, that he who puts his trust in him is a truer prophet than the disciples of Baal. Were I urged by no other principle, I thought it my duty not to give my countenance, insignificant as it is, to such

an alarm, obviously unfounded, by the postponement of the present business. I knew that at no time would your charity disappear, a virtue so peculiarly born yours; which all the demands of the world cannot extinguish in your hearts; and which, perhaps at this moment, stands between you and the visitation of God. When was there ever a greater occasion for exercising it? When misery is increased to the most enormous growth; when such ruin surrounds you as would force tears from the most rigid, and harrow up the stores of the worshippers of gold.

No; that charity should cease here, was a thought of horror; a libel on heaven; a detraction from your character. I dismissed it with execration. I resolved to go on. And again, and again do I say, that, so far from losing my usual trust in you, I never ascended this pulpit with more confidence of you in my heart. You know the particular case of these infants. You know they have no support to expect from the parish to which they belong; it is not equal to it. There is no part of this great capital where

the dispositions of Providence are more awefully written. If it has not a pre-eminence, it has, at least, a fair struggle for pre-eminence in every description of human calamity. The number of destitute and famishing children is now great beyond all former times. Not one of these before you whose father is not actually, or has not been in the ranks of his country. To your hearts I submit it, Whether it be not mercy, and superior mercy, to support an institution like this, in the midst of misery and desolation? This, indeed, I may say you have already done: last year alone gave it a shock that went nearly to dissolve it.

Our call on you was unfortunately at a time when the town was much emptied; not enough was raised to maintain these objects. I resisted, however a reduction of their number One benevolent man was found to supply the deficiency. I relied on this day; convinced that, when reminded of our misfortune, you would greatly feel, and powerfully repair it. I have not known you for ten long years without being sensible, that there are extremities which you cannot

resist. I leave you; I trust in you. Not all the inauspicious forebodings I have heard could depress that feeling for a moment. I stand to these unhappy objects in a tender relation. Oh! let their pastor and father implore you to save him from the mortal affliction of seeing them cast out on a world of iniquity and woe. I can say no more.

Grant this, O God, for the sake of thy Son Jesus Christ; to whom, with thee, and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

# SERMON XI.

[This was a Charity Sermon preached in the Year 1798, for the Benefit of the Widows and Children of those of the Yeomen and Militia Men, who fell in the Rebellion.]

JOHN, XIII. 34.

*A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.*

I GIVE thanks to the supreme God that I meet you in this place! That his temples are still open to echo the voice of his ministers and servants! And that every thing sacred to civilised and religious men, yet defies, under the shield of divine protection, all the fury of fanaticism, impiety, and rebellion. Yes, my fellow citizens, and fellow Christians, I come hither to rejoice with you; to glory with you in the advancing triumph of a cause, which all the freedom and virtue of the universe must call their own. No, never shall the

monster, Jacobinism, exult in the ruins of our happy constitution; or the influences, the charities, the hopes of a divine religion, be replaced by a detested system of pretended reason and avowed impiety. No, Neither will God abandon us at this awful moment! or shall we abandon ourselves. A deluded multitude may yet continue the instruments of desperate and sanguinary leaders; they may yet be pushed on to fresh experience of defeat and destruction! The delusive hopes of rapacity, or workings of superstition may still uphold their phrenzy! The blood of the innocent and the guilty, the loyal and disloyal, may long mingle in this unhappy contest; but Ireland can never perish while she deserves to live, whilst her virtue and her mind are in counsel and in arms; whilst every hour reveals such new and astonishing energies; and every life that flows, and every wound that is inflicted in her cause, becomes, as we daily witness, the seed of a prouder and more invincible combination. O! my friends, from what a destiny have we been saved! Never, never should we forget that signal providence which has so long watched over our safety,

which unbound the very elements to protect our shores from invasion; that early laid open the whole train of this damnable conspiracy; that on the very eve of its explosion overwhelmed its principal supporters, and prepared every loyal soul to meet a most formidable crisis with the countenance and spirit of heroes. What, I say, what would our dear and common country have been at this present hour, had not heaven so mercifully interposed in its behalf? Had negligence and torpor distinguished our government, instead of vigilance and vigour? Had we been gulled by specious cries of patriotic sounds, and with a train ready to spring under our feet? What—What? but one vast and deplorable scene of misery and desolation! All right, all order, all distinction annihilated! The possession of property become a mark of inevitable proscription; the stones of our sanctuaries dragged into the public places; the ministers of heaven devoted in the face of day; our wives and virgins polluted by the passions of brutes and barbarians.

Every friend to humanity and mode-

ration, every man averse to *revolutionary horrors*, butchered without mercy. "Blood, in the language of the prophet, touching blood," and to crown all, the *demon of superstition* sharpening and extending the cruelty of the multitude, and tearing from their breast the last remnant of remorse and compassion. Such, such is the Revolution, from which heaven, in its supreme mercy, has hitherto delivered us! Nor is it unlikely that the savage actors in it, when their work was complete, would have shed in equal torrents the blood of one another, to determine who should possess the empire, or greater division of the ruin.

I am induced from a severe regard to truth to mention that religious animosity, which too clearly, and too woefully appears to have been pressed into the service of the present rebellion. I trust I shall not be considered as inflamed myself, and consequently desirous of inflaming my protestant brethren, with the same abominable sentiment. No, as I hope for mercy at the great day, there is no principle in nature more foreign to the ruling disposition of

my soul. Whatever the magnitude of their injuries may be, I would rather remind them of that memorable and godlike answer, which our divine Saviour made to his disciples, when solicited to command fire from heaven for the destruction of a Samaritan village. "Ye know not," said he, "what manner of spirit ye are of." The Son of Man came not to inspire men with principles of malevolence, cruelty, and revenge; but to fill the human bosom with godlike forbearance, amity, and love. I would rather inculcate on them, what a striking contrast all sanguinary and uncharitable feelings present to the character of HIM who was eminently the friend of mankind, in whose breast every thing dwelt that was humane and *divine*, and who bequeathed us this glorious sentence as a living and eternal lesson, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, *if ye love one another.*"

It is greatly to be lamented, and the thought cannot fail to inspire a serious mind with the most generous pity and indignation, that Christians should, in all ages of

the church, have so miserably departed from the spirit of the Gospel. I am sorry to make the following remark; but, alas, it is but too just and obvious. There is no species of history which a benevolent man, or well wisher of the human race, reads with less pleasure, or rather with more disgust, than ecclesiastical annals. Had our blessed Lord left us this precept on record, "A new commandment I give unto you, that you hate one another," it could not have been better fulfilled than it has been from the third century down to the present hour.

One shudders to think what seas of human blood have been spilt, in what are called *religious wars*, and with what circumstances of refined barbarity, and unwearied perseverance, various and discordant parties of Christians have laboured to exterminate one another. It is not improbable that our Saviour and his disciples might have had these unhappy scenes in view, when they so earnestly conjured Christians, by every affecting argument and motive to cultivate mutual affection

and concord. Nor certainly is there any thing that shows our divine religion in a more endearing light, than, that it is by no means chargeable with those mischiefs, and horrors which the worst passions of human nature have engendered; but, that its sole study, its grand and primary object is, to reconcile us to one another by means of *one* common union, *one* common Redeemer, and inspire all who bend to the sacred name of *Jesus*, with unbounded philanthropy and love. Persevere then, my high-minded friends, in defending the cause of human nature and your country, with energies that are worthy of it; but dishonour it not by a black and unchristian auxiliary. Obey the glorious impulse of patriotism alone, discard all emblems, abjure all names, but those of men determined to expire with the constitution and the throne.

If you have beheld with horror and affliction, the wanton and unprecedented enormities of a blind and sanguinary bigotry; if in too many instances, the unoffending professors of our national religion, have

been barbarously cut off in the bosom of their retirements, pursue those monsters with tenfold vengeance, who have infused this exterminating spirit into the breasts of the multitude; drag them to atonement in the face of an enlightened world; but pity the deluded instruments, even reeking as they are with the blood of innocence: shew them that you are *Christians*, that you regard every human creature without distinction as a brother, and would make as great sacrifices to promote the happiness, relieve the necessities, or protect the life of an individual who differed, as of one who agreed with you in religious communion.

These are sentiments I think it my duty to express, in the aweful situation in which we are placed. Sentiments which Jesus Christ himself, did he stand in this chair, would express; and which, had I the whole rational world as my audience, must be generally revered and approved.

When I look to the condition of this country some short time back, I trace a picture which every friend to the happiness

of his fellow creatures must view with satisfaction, nay even with delight. 'Tis true there is nothing human in which theorists and declaimers on first principles, may not discover blots, and pronounce exceptionable. But will any honest, unprejudiced and thinking man, who estimates the degree of felicity to which a community may aspire, not by arguments drawn from fancy, but with wise and proper allowance for those errors and deviations, that are inseparable from humanity; will any such man pronounce that the condition of Ireland, at the period I allude to, was not more than enviable? Name, I may say, a single public and social blessing that we did not enjoy, or were not gradually enjoying; we possess the freest, yes, the freest form of constitution under heaven. Every hour had brought us nearer to the fullest participation of it: our legislative independence had been gloriously and irrevocably established! The great and capital restriction on our trade, which was so much complained of, had fallen to the ground; our judges were declared for life; the right of appeal to the British House of Lords was given up; concession

came, after concession; whatever the pride of freemen demanded, the affection, wisdom, policy and justice of England had surrendered, or were fast surrendering.—Those shackles in which the jealousy of angry times had deemed it necessary to bind a large proportion of our community, had yielded, in the master links, to the long experience of their loyalty; and our catholic brethren were advancing with rapid, dignified step, into the bosom of the constitution. If the state of our representation remained capable of reform, let it be remembered, that on this subject, the very best and wisest men were divided; and that even the illustrious father of the present British minister, though confessedly one of the most ardent, powerful and virtuous assertors of liberty the empire ever saw, recoiled from the experiment. With all this our commerce, our manufactures were palpably improved, if not flourishing; the condition of the meaner orders as palpably meliorated, and every quarter of the nation making rapid advances to wealth and prosperity.

From the evidence of my own eyes, I

can declare, that in the most impoverished of our provinces, a province of which, from the steady and unshaken loyalty it has evinced in this trying moment, I am proud to feel myself a native; the scene was universally changed, and instead of hereditary beggary and rags, presented a happy and contented people, possessing in abundance all the common comforts and necessaries of life. Such was the high ground on which we stood; such the manifest condition of Ireland, when the infernal demon of French liberty and equality came, like Satan into Eden, to attempt to blast our happiness.

That in every society, some turbulent and discontented spirits should be found; men born to subvert, traitors by nature to all rule and government, who, in the lust of dominion, would grasp with avidity at schemes of innovation, and readily overturn the best blessings of their country, whatever difficulty or horror might attend the execution, neither can or will create matter of astonishment; since heaven itself nourished *serpents* in its bosom, *who preferred reigning* in the

abyss, to the fulness of fruition in the realms of glory!

But that any considerable portion of the people of Ireland, tasting, as I have showed, all the sweets of prosperity and peace, drinking at the very spring of liberty, should be so blinded, so infatuated; their reason, their senses, their gratitude to Heaven and their country, so completely overwhelmed by the specious and diabolical arts of a handful of traitors, as to spurn at their happy condition, and give an example to the world of the most bloody and atrocious rebellion, is a circumstance as harrowing to every feeling of the heart, as it would seem unaccountable to every effort of the human understanding.

Oh, my friends, were it given me, ungifted as I am, to address the deluded multitude, methinks it were impossible, but the force and ardour of truth would make way to their hearts; impossible but the scales of deception would drop from their eyes; and those eyes behold, with horror, the daggers that are planted in the breast

of their country. "Hold!" would I say to them, "in the midst of your headlong career, and hear the voice of him, who is neither the organ of party, nor the instrument of faction, but a minister of the God of peace, who comes before you with a heart bleeding at your errors, and panting for your happiness; look around and survey the havoc you have made; consider your objects, and the means you have employed. You have turned the fairest portion of your native soil into a frightful desert; thousands have been reduced by you, in one moment, from the possession of all human blessings, to a state of houseless misery and despair: thousands have fled, or are flying, in all directions, from the scourge of war, excited by you. The capital is crowded with the mourning widows and orphans of those you have massacred in the coldest blood. Hands that were never raised to Heaven in vain, are now fervently uplifted for vengeance on your guilty heads; the earth is drunk with the blood of your own companions in rebellion; their wives and children are expiring of famine in the open fields, and public ways. You

have entailed, and are entailing, eternal infamy on yourselves and posterity, by resistance to the institutions of a nation that loved and cherished you; and by deeds, in that resistance, unknown to cannibals and barbarians. Such are your means, and what are your objects? In what have you been persecuted, in what oppressed? Where is the evil in your condition that could justify proceedings execrable to human nature, and the whole social world. Alas, you know not! You have been promised visions, and they fly before you; and visions you would have found them to be, had even your present phrenzy been crowned with success. Liberty! you felt, you possessed it; and believe me, would have exchanged it for the most abject experience of slavery! Property! you possessed that abundance suited to your condition; and have been dragged from the peace and plenty of your hearths, to meet death and destruction in all forms, and range abroad in the detested profession of plunderers and bloodhounds. Look at France. She had some colour, some apology, for encountering the evils of revolt. All the rights of man, all the noble

aspirings of his nature were crushed by the iron foot of despotism; but what has she gained; she is still in bonds. Tyranny the most palpable and various, and the worse and more incurable for being covered by the sacred name of liberty, still bows her to the earth. Her unhappy people possess no alternative but that of serving in her ranks, or perishing by hunger or proscription. Years rolling on years, will not restore her to the common level of society. Centuries cannot retrieve her character—seas wash away her enormities. Oh, my countrymen, oh, my brethren, profit by the great lesson of experience! Be no longer the dupes of your worst enemies; spurn those traitors who have hitherto misled, and would still mislead you; return to your duty; be not insensible to the best gifts of Heaven; cast yourselves on the mercy of your country. If she has spirit and resolution to pour vengeance on the heads of rebellious and unnatural children, she has bowels to embrace them when they appear before her in the garb of repentance. But beware, most solemnly do I conjure you, beware, by an obstinate and fruitless

struggle of impelling her for her own safety and tranquillity, to bind those in eternal chains, "who prove unworthy to be free." This is the language in which I would address them. This is the language in which, as far as possible, they ought daily to be addressed. To contrive all means of preventing the spreading of human calamity, and stopping the effusion of human blood, should be the unwearied passion, nay, and engage the very dreams of humanity. Had we been as active before the commencement of this unfortunate scene, in intercepting those mists which the industry of incendiaries was drawing fast over the popular mind, as we have since been in the protection of all that is dear to us, it is more than probable, we never should have seen even the colour of open resistance. But what did we do? Why, shocked and alarmed at occasional excesses, and the growing spirit of midnight robbery and assassination, we abandoned our posts, fled from the infested quarter, and left the field open to the quiet and uninterrupted apostleship of agents and sowers of sedition.

All the weight of providing against the first

symptoms of a coming storm was cast on the shoulders of government. Our streets were filled with those who, instead of remaining in the circles of their natural influence and authority to exert necessary vigour in the suppression of disorders; to open the eyes of their tenants and dependants on their true interests; to guard them from the infection of French principles, by the words of wise and fervent admonition, came hither in crowds, with rueful tales and rueful countenances, to spread despondency, and pass their time in sauntering inquiries on the news of the day. But it is folly to look back. When the die was thrown, they showed how greatly they could atone for a mere error; and Ireland will be distinguished in the records of time, as an illustrious and adamantine rock, against which the overwhelming surges of French anarchy have dashed in vain. Yes, if it owe not its salvation singly to our brave and magnanimous yeomanry; it would, if necessary, have owed it. If the generous and noble aid it has received (and is receiving) from the sister-country had, by any disastrous chance, been withheld, *Ireland was sufficient to Ireland.* I say it; and every

loyal soul in this congregation would arise, and echo,— *Ireland was sufficient to Ireland.* No man who has witnessed the ardor of his citizen-soldiers; the countenance they present; the forms they display; the discipline they evince; the copious and impetuous torrents of loyalty that hourly flow to share and swell the honor of their ranks, can dispute the assertion for a single moment: qualities which, in mercenaries and unheated souls, are the mere conquest of time: such as ready submission to controul; strict military subordination; cool contempt of danger, and patience of all toil, in them the burning fire of true patriotism has rapidly created. Yes, men enlightened by the invaluable objects they were born to enjoy, came forth in the great hour of danger, ready trained, to conquer by the sacred and inspiring genius of the constitution.

. . .

Glorious body! It is not for me to do justice to your triumphs. They only who beheld you in a nearer view; who beheld every hour your panting alacrity to meet the enemy; they only who led you into action, and have seen you in the field of

death, bearing down every thing before you, and, nobly prodigal of your blood, are equal to record them. May the gratitude of your country be eternal! May you never have cause to say with the Roman patriot, "I would rather have it asked, why Cato had not a statue, than why he had one." May you sustain to the last the great character you have earned; and add to it the still greater, of returning to the tranquillity of private life; lamenting, in the spirit of divine religion, the fatal consequences of war, and undazzled by the rays of your own glory.

To the militia of Ireland I likewise gladly pay a feeble tribute. What an example have they presented of steady and uncorruptible loyalty! What regiment has not evinced itself worthy of our utmost confidence! and who shall again presume to tarnish with the unjust breath of suspicion the honour of an Irish soldier? Placed in the most delicate situation, too uninstructed to feel all the sacredness of the cause in which they were engaged; connected by innumerable ties; by country; by class; almost

universally by sect; perhaps, in numerous instances, by blood and consanguinity; such the unhappy people to whom they were opposed; they yet marched to the contest, not with dejected brows, but with high-crested spirit, and every where came out of it adorned with the wreath of superior valour, and unstained, as far as I could learn, with a single instance of defection. Let these gallant troops, this constitutional bulwark of our defence, occupy the high place they have merited in our respect and affection; and let us study, on all occasions, to make them feel and enjoy the greatest of all rewards, that of being numbered among the saviours of their country. More my heart would prompt me in their regard; had I said less it would reproach me.

There is an aweful consideration connected with the present subject, which the suddenness of my appearance in this place allows me not to dwell on. I leave it to abler hands, and cooler moments. Nor, certainly, should I have presumed on the hasty and indigested effusion you have heard, had I not long known, that you are

much more distinguished by generous indulgence than critical severity. I shall only beg leave, most earnestly to recommend a serious and true Christian return on ourselves. If ever it was called, most awefully called for, you will confess it is now. Let, I conjure you, the sacred empire of religion be resumed in our hearts. Let it shine out in our practice; and let us view, in the deplorable event that has taken place, not merely the effect of human causes, but the chastening, the awakening influence of a mighty and invisible hand. Horrible would our ingratitude be, horrible our insensibility, if both the inflictions and the mercies of Heaven were equally cast away. I would not reproach you. I would not look back. I would not descend from that elevation of feeling, which the happy prospect of a subsiding evil has universally inspired, to the miserable drudgery of detail on the subject of our past vices and errors. Too often, alas! has it been recurred to in vain: too often has all the zeal of the ministry split against the rock of our impenitence: our obstinate and immoveable perseverance in the most shameful disgrace of our calling.

Perhaps even at this hour, big as it is with a deluge of human calamity, the passions and abominations of our Israel still prescribe against the law; and not one being exists in its vast bosom, no not one, who, with broken and contrite heart trembles before the countenance of a long insulted God. But I commit, as I proposed, this solemn and important topic to your own reflections; and proceed to a very few words on the immediate purpose of your meeting.

Had I a son who greatly fell contending, as in the present cause, not only for the liberties and happiness of this country, but for the liberties and happiness of the world; a first movement of nature would no doubt draw a tear from my eye, or a groan from my heart; but that tribute once paid, I would hail his fate as blessed, and tread with pride and exultation on his glorious grave. Under the sanction of this feeling, which I am persuaded is still in a higher degree yours, I bring into your view all that is left of those who fought and conquered, and died in your defence. The

dear and tender pledges of expiring husbands and fathers, the merits of whose blood was the only legacy they had to bequeath them. I appeal not on this occasion to your mercy, I come not as usual, with study and preparation, to draw scenes of existing misery, and make aweful comparisons between the various destinies of God's creatures. I come not to combat the wretched subterfuges of selfishness, and arouse feelings of compassion, which passions of prodigality and dissipation are in arms to beat down; but in the fulness and effusions of my heart, to address hearts that already glow, not to meet an enemy, but to share a triumph, and be the more witness what high beating patriotism and loyalty can do at a moment like this. Deep would be the wound inflicted on the Irish character, if that enthusiasm which ever meets the eye and the ear out of this place, should subside into languor when called to give the most affecting test of its sincerity. What have I not a right to look for from you my fellow citizens on this head: when the sympathy, the generous and noble sympathy of England, poured out, not in

the course of one day, but in one hour, one thousand five hundred pounds, for support of the widows and children of all, without distinction, who fell or might fall in the present rebellion.

I reminded you, in the preceding part of this discourse, what your lot would have been, had this jacobine conspiracy of the ferocious and the base succeeded in sweeping away all the blessings you possess.

Let that consideration meet you now full in the face. Let the upper and the middling ranks, wealth and mediocrity, reflect on the sacred regard they owe to the last prayer of that valour which protected them from inevitable mendicity and ruin; and when their hands are extended to repay an incalculable benefit, let them pause and inquire of their hearts, whether the magnitude of the offering is proportioned to the exalted sacrifices that demand it. Let those ministers of religion and venerable prelates, who may now hear me, think of their sacred order rescued from the certainty of utter subversion, and pour out,

in the face of Heaven and their country, with tenfold abundance, those means they hold in trust for the happiness of their fellow-creatures. Let the female part of my congregation look back with horror on the dangers to which matron purity and unsullied innocence were exposed; and if those dear domestic ties, which constitute the whole scope of their felicity, be now secured to them for ever, let the unhappy objects I plead for find a natural and tender resting-place in their exulting bosoms. Let us all raise our eyes with ardent and eternal thanksgiving, for the preservation of religion, liberty, property, and life. And let the walls of this hallowed place, till they moulder into dust, call to the memory and veneration of man, the mighty tribute you will this day lay *on the altar of public gratitude and virtue.*

# SERMON XII.

[This Sermon was preached for the Female Orphan House.]

PSALM xviii. 16. 19.

*He sent from above. He took me. He drew me out of many waters. He brought me forth also into a large place. He delivered me, because he delighted in me.*

THUS it was, my brethren, that a religious prince referred to its mighty source, the signal and happy fortune he had experienced. Seated after many severe trials and hair-breadth escapes, on the throne to which providence had destined him, and tranquilly enjoying the love of his people, his heart unceasingly revolved, and his lips as unceasingly published, the glory and bounty of his Supreme Benefactor. From his tenderest years, God had marked him for his own. For him he had

rejected the posterity of Saul; for him he had passed by all the great and powerful of his own tribe; and that, at a season of life when he had nothing to recommend him but the innocence and simplicity of his heart. Nor was the Almighty satisfied with this mark of eternal election: his divine hand was the shield that protected him from every peril; from the fury of Goliah, the perfidy of Absalom, the snares of the Philistines, and the not less dangerous snares of his own prosperity and glory. In fine, to crown these mercies, God conducted him into a large place, that is, into the midst of Jerusalem, and established his residence and dominion for ever in the bosom of peace, security, and abundance.

Such, my brethren, may I in a degree pronounce to be the distinctive mercy which God has shewn to the numerous objects of this great institution. He has *drawn them out of many waters, he has delivered them, because he delighted in them.* He has chosen them from amidst thousands of their own tribe, whom his unsearchable judg-

ments I have still committed to the wide world, its evils, and its woes; and he has conducted them into a large place; that is, within the walls of a comprehensive and glorious asylum, where their helpless sex and immaculate purity are secured for ever from the worst of fates, temporal and eternal.

From the first moment of its establishment, my brethren, we may perceive the manifest agency of a superintending providence. A blessed woman, of high rank, who is now in glory, first laid its foundation within the precincts of her own house. Many before me at this moment can bear witness to this singular example of Christian benevolence. The wretched creatures she thus collected into her bosom, increased every day; she maintained them at her sole expence, she instructed them with her own lips, she walked before them, as to her example, like a divinity in human form; dead to the world and its pleasures; her doors barred against vain and idle intrusion; her whole train and equipage discharged, she lived but to devote her fortune and her

life to this labour of love. Too eager, alas! was heaven to reward such virtue, it was unfortunately the swift, but glorious evidence, how far it was possible for a human creature to throw off all the imperfections of mortality. In the midst of her sacred and laborious occupation, the grave opened apparently to frustrate her designs and hopes. But the virtues of the truly righteous communicate a soul (if I may so express myself) to their very remains, that irresistibly impels to the imitation of their example. Scarcely did that affecting portion of now doubly orphans, let fall a tear on the tomb of their adored parent and benefactress; scarcely did they look around them at that terrible moment with dismay and trembling, when she still seemed to exist in kindred and congenial spirits; they were eagerly collected under the wings of equal benevolence, and a cause which visibly displayed, in its origin, the spirit of God, as sensibly felt him in the wonder of its rescue from early destruction. Contrary to the fortune of all new institutions, whose progress is gradual in public favour and protection, the very first appeal of this

nature which it made, afforded in the contribution a brilliant prognostic of its future prosperity and glory; nor amidst the many vicissitudes of years that too generally weaken the fervor of first impressions, has one ground of presumption occurred, that this cause is not destined to flourish as long as religion and humanity continue to be revered. Such, my brethren, is the history of the object which I am once more come before you to recommend.

Perhaps of all sources of corruption in human society there is none greater, than that lamentable degradation of the female sex, which this institution, from the extensive scale on which it is conducted, must go extensively to diminish. In the consideration of this point, I place the misfortune of fallen woman, as far as it involves her own fate temporal and eternal, totally out of the question. To this I shall speak in the sequel; I would here only consider the effect which her depravity is known to produce on the morals of every rank of the community; and I do say,

when we deliberately look to the variously desperate complexion of that effect, there is no principle, Christian or social, that must not give superior importance to the preventive before us. How many parents, even in the highest order of life, can bear woeful testimony to the total perversion of youth, by the seductions of the vicious part of the female sex! The fondest hopes of rising excellence disappointed; fortune opprobriously dissipated; constitution radically broke down; living spectres of early decrepitude! Every ingrafted virtue, every sacred principle of education effaced, every vice that can dishonour human nature and religion springing from this one impure root. Objects to whom they tenderly looked up for the pride and consolation of their age, often presenting nothing to their eyes but the premature compound of the demon and the brute. This may appear to be strong language on the subject; but to know the world at all, is to know that it is more than justified. When youth is once allured into the mysteries of libertinism, there is no excess or enormity that is not swallowed like water. It is the property of

this fatal evil even to mar the finest qualities of nature. Often are talents and spirits fitted for the greatest purposes of society entombed for ever in this sepulchre of the soul; nothing that belongs to mind can have power to charm where mind would appear no more. If youths who might have pressed forward to the most honorable distinction are daily to be seen without a spark of virtuous emulation; insensible even to that love of fame which in default of purer motives gives birth to such diversified objects of human ability, roaming through the capital with stupid and licentious gaze, dead to the respect of character, and equally lost to their country and the world; impute it to no other cause than that unhappy corruption of morals which extinguishes the nobler aspirings of man, to substitute the pursuits of a vile instinct. Would you vindicate, my brethren, the honour of religion and nature; would you behold in youth the ambition of pre-eminence in virtue and usefulness? establish purity and severity of morals, by cutting off the foul source of their depravation; do this, I say, and instead of swarms of

walking and ignominious nuisances you will have men—you will have citizens—more—instead of the contempt of Christian practice, private and public; instead of the affected and blasphemous language of infidelity (for the libertine is invariably profane), you will have youth glorying in submission to the sacred principles of their religion, and affording the happy and edifying spectacle of its influence on their conduct.

And here, my brethren, I am naturally led to observe, that if there be any obligation on a Christian that towers above all others, it is that of stemming, by all possible means, the progress and example of impiety. On the consequences of this evil it is needless for me to dwell. That it leads to the destruction of the best interests of society, and commission of all crimes, the present generation has had evidence enough. It has been a prodigy reserved for our times, to see impiety become, by its monstrous excesses, its own executioner, and, (contrary to its hopes and natural tendency,) the principle of regeneration and social order throughout the Christian world. We have

seen, too, the not inferior prodigy of religion, solemnly and ostentatiously brought forward to justify the foulest usurpation of sovereign power, in the eyes of the very nation that with recent and impious rage had overturned its altars, and laid the dust of their ruin with the blood of its ministers!

All I would urge on this occasion is, the solemn duty of striking at a known source of every thing insolent and daring in irreligion: that libertinism is such, no one of common experience can doubt. If there be any example on record, which I much question, of pure morals being coupled with infidelity, there are thousands where vice alone is its principle and its nurse: like the ocean, which, tormented by the tempest, vomits on its shore its various filth and impurity, the libertine, tormented by conscience, vomits against the religion that devotes him all the suggestions of his foul heart and imagination; finding it impossible to ally faith with the brutal indulgence of his passions, he furiously adopts the resource of renouncing the one, in order to maintain the gratification of the

other. It was thus, my brethren, that even the wisest and most favoured of men, openly insulted and disavowed the worship of the true God, from the moment he became a slave to the allurement of infamous women. It is against this, and an infinite variety of evils, the most shocking to religion and society, that we provide, in labouring to root out the prostitution of the female sex. But I have not done. How much might be said on the degree to which human nature is debased and perverted, and the infernal put on in receptacles of ill fame! What amalgamation of horrors! What nightly scenes of furious discord; howling riot, and mad intoxication! Horrible imprecations; not unfrequently blood, accidental or premeditated; oftener, I fear, premeditated than accidental. What youth ever sallied forth, after inhaling the blasting air of such a school, but to exhibit an object of glorying depravity, and a various pest to the pure and religious part of the community?

Are we ignorant to what extremity, even in the violation of common honour and

honesty, youth may be impelled by the fascinating tyranny of impure connexions? I will venture to assert, that there are few shameful departures in youth from principle, that do not arise from such a source. One of the most heart-rending dramatic productions we know, was never understood to be a misrepresentation of life, or a libel on the human character, when it paints the sovereign empire of abandoned woman, leading an unhappy youth, step by step, through all the gradations of guilt, to the final consummation of the most unnatural of all crimes. If we are unacquainted with terrible examples, it is sufficient that their root is spread wide in our society; and I do verily believe, were it possible to ascertain all that it cautiously envelopes in darkness, we should come to the knowledge of facts, for which, neither in the provision of human nor divine laws, there is adequate vengeance. Let the fond and anxious parent, let the true Christian, and true citizen, reflect on these things, when I call them to the support of this sacred institution! In the long period of my appearance in this cause, never did I take a ground

that ought to have more effect in a Christian assembly.

I know, my brethren, that you are not less capable of being influenced by appeals to your reason and religion, than by those that are calculated to affect your feelings; yet let me remind you, on this subject, of the numberless innocent creatures that are daily drawn into receptacles of impurity. What arts are first employed to keep off, for a time, the suspicion of their fate, the affectation of the tenderest affection, language the most reserved and specious, the generosity which bestows all the variety and finery of dress, the whirl of continued pleasure and amusement, every thing that can discard reflection, fascinate the youthful heart, and insensibly enervate its proudest propensity; till the black moment arrives when the veil is drawn, and the fairest work of God consigned for ever to the trade of pollution. I appeal to your own souls, whether there ever was a case in the mysteries of iniquity to inspire more abhorrence, or, viewed with the eyes of humanity alone, that called more affectingly for re-

medy? Nay, it is not uncommon to see prostitute caterers for public vice, exhibiting by their sides, in the very pomp of equipage, those devoted and deluded victims; as if the works of darkness were not triumph enough to their infernal calling, without shewing, in the face of the sun, how far the indignant feelings of a Christian people could be insulted with impunity.

It is almost unnecessary to mention the obvious effect of female vice, on the morals of men in the lower class of society; if, in that order of life where, at least, some principles of religion and virtue have been implanted, and much solicitude obtains on the point of honour and reputation, the effect be such as I have represented, what must it be where the evil in question finds no fear of God, no struggle of conscience, no recoil from infamy, to resist the all-perverting influence? Look to those seats of intemperance, where schemes of depredation, robbery, and blood, are secretly concerted, and you will invariably find abandoned women mixing in their councils, stimulating the wavering, confirming the irresolute, re-

proaching the cowardly, hardening the hard, bearing down all sentiments of mercy, cheering against the dread of consequences, and dismissing, by their influence, not men but monsters, against the security of property and life; this is also what we are here to prevent.

To whatever degree of wickedness man may arrive, there yet often remains some spark of generous and noble feelings about him; examples are not wanting of successful appeals to it; but the wickedness of women has not a grain of alloy from any sentiment that can soften the soul in the execution of the worst horrors. Adorned with excellence, she soars nearest to the Divinity; in the consequences of her fall, she descends lower than the abyss! Look to your places of execution, and every feeling must be agonized to see troops of such women receiving the everlasting farewell of the wretches they conducted to that dreadful extremity! And let ministers of religion say, whether there is one instance in a thousand, of expiring malefactors who do not, with their last breath, pronounce the

contagion of such society to be the chief cause of their misfortunes? There is not, I trust, one individual in this place, whose heart is not bound up with the growth of religion and morality, and the unshaken stability of subordination, security and peace in this community. These are objects for which we should eminently live and breathe; coldness to them is guilt, zeal for them nearly all virtue. But, though our ardor in this way even impelled us to the sublime exertions of communicating Christian education, and careful seclusion from vice, to every male child in the metropolis, it would be exertion inevitably defeated, did a foul and certain source of corruption to youth continue to be fed by the unresisted influx of deserted female infants. I leave you, therefore, to decide in your hearts of what interest and importance is the cause before us; but, if it goes to the diminution of a great public evil, it likewise goes to provide for the great personal concern of these destitute creatures; which is the next consideration I have to urge.

My brethren, if the institution for which I plead goes (as I have endeavoured to im-

press on you) to the extinction of a great public evil, it likewise goes to provide for the great personal concern of these orphans. This is a motive to your bounty, which no minister of God can be justified in passing over. That zeal for the salvation of souls is the highest distinction of Christian benevolence, every true Christian must feel. It is the sentiment that descended from heaven to accomplish the work of our redemption, and passed from the heart of the Redeemer into those of his disciples, to a degree that filled the heathen world with astonishment. It is the sentiment whose recompence, we read, shall exceed the brilliancy of the stars for ever and ever; and without which the most zealous of Apostles declares, that even the faith to remove mountains, or the eloquence of angels, or the most profuse donations to the poor, would carry in the scale of our account, not the weight of a feather. It is altogether independent of natural compassion; operating with the same fervour in the coldest blood, for the happiness of man when the little interests of time are no more. If we are solemnly commanded to let our light so shine before men,

that they may see our good works, it is with a view to this object alone, that the mute eloquence of our example may become the means of their salvation. The more corrupted the world is, the more we are bound to exhibit that light, which, while it shames and rebukes the prevailing degeneracy, goes, at the same time, to resist its contagion. To advance the spiritual interest of our brethren, is the life-blood of our calling. In vain would we build on that species of practice, which avoids equally the character of a sinner and a saint. Under the solemn law of edification we become scandalous before God, when we confine ourselves to the not being scandalous before men: it is not sufficient that we are seen to decline evil, we must be seen, according to our power, to embrace all good. "He that knoweth to do good," saith St. James, "and doeth it not, to him it is sin." And, as a rich man would evidently counteract and insult the just and merciful designs of Providence, were he rich only for himself; or a man gifted with any talent useful to society, did he consign it, without unavoidable necessity, to inaction; so the Christian,

who does not strenuously labour to edify; be his private regularity, his concealed righteousness what it may, to him it is sin; because God proposes, in our conduct, a far greater object than ourselves; he proposes to touch, to convert, to save others by the happy ministry of our open and industrious example; yes, sometimes by the shining light of a single individual, to renew the declining empire of religion, and bring about the salvation of thousands.

No error, therefore, I repeat, is more gross, common as it is, than to imagine that the solemn obligation of good example is discharged, by not giving bad. Nay, I feel no difficulty in saying that this error may even be more ruinous in its consequences than the example of excessive depravity, which disgusts by its enormity. But when few instances of singular piety and virtue appear, to direct the uncertain steps of youth in the elevated way they should go, to confirm the principles, and support the first fervor of their education, the consequence is, (what we daily see) that they quickly fall in with the torrent of

semi-christianity, deem every thing allowable but positive vice; are led to ally all the pleasures and abuses of the world with the hopes of their calling, and like multitudes around them, and multitudes that went before them, are damned in the bosom of fancied innocence and security. I say fancied security, for what semi-christian ever dreamed that he had cause to tremble?

It was in part the subject of my last discourse from this place to dissipate the monstrous illusion of those who, contrary to the express letter and spirit of the Gospel, would reconcile their salvation with a life of eternal dissipation. But how many others, with concience equally tranquil, would seem to imagine themselves placed upon this earth, not for the happiness of others temporal or everlasting, but to bask and batten in indolence like the pampered animal of the field? What said the generous Uriah, when pressed by David to inglorious ease? While the soldiers of Israel are abroad, and front every danger for the salvation of the children of God, shall I enter my house to eat and to drink? Education

and talents may vary in a degree the nature of our service, but nothing can excuse the Christian from vigorous and unceasing efforts to promote, in one way or another, the cause of God and of society. It is impossible to open the sacred writings without finding the oblivion of this inexorably denounced. The tree that displays foliage without fruit is committed to the flames; and the slothful servant is cast out into exterior darkness. What then is to be said of those indifferent lookers on; who reap largely in a field that they have not sown? what of that prosperity which, in the face of soliciting religion and country, claims the contemptible privilege of having nothing to do? "Like mountains remarkable only for their sterility and elevation, that fatigue the earth with their burthen, and chill it with their shadows; or like those divinities of which the prophet speaks, whose temples were adorned with all riches and art; and whose altars smoked with the choicest victims, yet who took neither interest nor part in the administration of the universe.—Whatever the advantages and distinctions of our situation may be, services are the

condition by which we hold and enjoy them before God and man. If we are raised above others, it is not for the purpose of sporting in the face of the world a proud and disdainful inutility, but to exist in the whole capacity of our being, for laborious efforts to promote the happiness of others, temporal and everlasting; for the advancement of religion and virtue, the shame and suppression of vice; for vigilant activity, and (if necessary) death, in support of social order and the laws, the present edification of our youthful brethren, the moral and christian cultivation of the infant generation, the diffuse and ready relief of all calamity. This is an outline of the various and noble usefulness to which we are called. Woe unto them who, bound to know and to feel their inviolable engagement to such good, provide nothing for their epitaph but that they vegetated and expired. It is not uncommon to hear such Christians descanting with grave and important faces at the tables of luxurious abundance, on the decline of pious principles and practice.—Insulting language! the cause is but too simple, the too much lack of great and

zealous examples in both. This is the true rock of offence to youth. It is not to see here and there a few individuals without religion or morals, whose worst passions are their only divinities; reason alone is often more than sufficient antidote against the effects of such poison; but it is the want of adequate inducement to avert their eyes from this specious and alluring practice of semi-christians; for the example which shocks the least is that which seduces the most; contagion is invariably found to spread in proportion to the veil that covers it.

There is still another class of semi-christians to whom I owe a word; and who have not even the colour of mistake to excuse them; I mean those who, with the best intentions and most zealous dispositions, are deterred from exhibiting the example they otherwise would afford, by the apprehension of being classed with a particular sect, which the world, to cover its own relaxations, ingeniously represents as hanging out the flag of primitive manners. With the tenets and doctrines of others I have

nothing to do; but this I conceive to be indubitable, that in point of practice there is but one rule for all Christians; and that it is as glorious openly to do honour to it, as the reverse is opprobrious and criminal, let the colour or pretext be what it may. What! my brethren, to sacrifice our convictions, our inclinations, our souls, from dread of the world's ridicule! To place the Supreme Majesty of God in the balance with such a principle! To know him, I may say, only in secret, while the world has our open homage! Like the heathen, to reduce him to the degraded state of a domestic idol; or like Rachel, to conceal and adore him in our tents unknown to our brethren! Thus it was with one of the first and most celebrated disciples of our Saviour. This progenitor of half Christians vainly persuaded himself that God would be satisfied with the private declarations of his sentiments, but, for the rest, that he would graciously condescend to dispense with his outward adoption of a system to which the world attached shame and dishonour. Is not this precisely the state of those who would be Christians in the most rigorous

and exalted sense of the word, but for the want of resolution to encounter the same formidable consequence. Heavens! what extremity of weakness and dissimulation is this! The libertine glories in his vice, and shall Christians blush at and recoil from the highest dignity and glory of their character? Is it to the world then we shall be responsible! If we are sentenced, will the world stand between us and the execution? If the Lord justifies us, what matter who ridicules or condemns us? Will not every one carry his own burthen before the terrible majesty of him who will judge the world and its judgments? Do such Christians reflect to what this system of servility and complaisance leads? That it not only stands in the way of the infinite good their example would produce; but reduces them to the deplorable necessity of sanctioning and taking part in practices which they secretly detest, of becoming with their eyes open, and with somewhat of affection in their hearts, the cause of perdition to their brethren; nay, casting with trembling hands their very children into the vortex of worldly manners, and thus training

them to perish in the face of a menacing religion, and that bleeding affection, that agonizing solicitude for their happiness, present and everlasting, which nature inspires.

To enumerate all the consequences of this unhappy principle would be incompatible with my limits; a principle too much resembling, and perhaps equal in guilt to, the examples we have of early apostacy from the faith. For when a Christian, with the love and respect of religion, and its virtues in his heart, yet refuses the open and illustrious testimony he owes them, no matter for what divinity he does so; it might as well be for a graven image as for the world; for idols of Pagan superstition as for the idol I speak of. Let such Christians remember, and beware when they remember, that to them it is peculiarly said, "He that denies me before men, him will I deny before my Father who is in heaven."

I may, perhaps, appear to have wandered in a degree from my subject, in pro-

posing the immortal interests of the creatures before us, as a transcendant motive in support of this great institution. I think the reverse; for how could I have impressed it more powerfully on your souls than by shewing that it is not here alone we are called to such ministry, but that the whole tenor of our lives should be zealously directed to the honor, the glory, the progress of a divine religion, and the salvation of our brethren. With the aid of that victorious grace which God in his mercy sometimes attaches to the delivery of his word, the reflections I have offered on this subject may produce this happy and double effect; that is, not only stimulate and renew our zeal for the everlasting concern of those I plead for, but lead us to think more seriously of our own. After all, my brethren, we may be busy about many things; but I am sure we have had melancholy lessons enough, in the course of a few months, of the instability of life, to convince and remind those who believe, that there is strictly but one thing necessary. I pass to the last consideration I mean to urge on this occasion.

Having considered this institution, from the enlarged scale on which it is conducted, as tending, in a superior degree, to the extinction of an evil most destructive to public morals; having likewise pressed the support of it as extensively providing for the salvation of such children, it remains to say a word on their temporal destiny. And here, my brethren, the appeal addresses itself to your compassion, that feeling for calamity which it has pleased the God of nature to implant, though in different degrees, in every human heart, and the God of revelation to enjoin upon all Christians as a superior and indispensable duty; that feeling which many, perhaps all of you, have repeatedly found to communicate in its exercise the most transporting pleasure; pleasure which leaves behind it no bitterness or loathing; but which, ever stimulated by the past, ever new in the present; still increases in proportion to the extent and extremity of the misery it relieves. How few are the other enjoyments of man that can claim this distinction and encomium? How few of them are supported by any thing but the intoxication

of the senses, or the illusions of vanity? I see the child of dissipation wandering like the bee from flower to flower; but less fortunate in his labour, collecting nothing for his home but the melancholy provision of weariness and disgust. I see the man of ambition toiling incessantly, sacrificing repose, property and health, sometimes even probity and honour, for objects that either vanish from the grasp, or lose their fascination after a short interval of possession. I see the enamoured of worldly reputation often reaping no other fruit from their distinction, than to hear it ascribed, by the envious to popular errror. I see the interested drudging through life merely to die in the possession of what they never enjoyed. I see all human passions carrying with them their own punishment and torment. Even the soft flatterer hope, embittering by its suspense and anxiety; and where hope is no more, I see deeper misery still. In short, in the whole history of the world, and its votaries, I see the severest, yet most righteous penalties, providentially inflicted on that error which seeks for felicity, out of the arms of be-

nevolence and virtue. If we look into the causes of love and respect, we shall find none more certain or more powerful than the interest which we teach the unfortunate to take in our existence and preservation. The truly benevolent are more than beloved, they are adored; the blessings of the poor, and the reverence of all are shed on them as they pass; and many a name in this nation will be embalmed in holy recollection, when those of heroes and statesmen are forgotten, even that of him, who now fills the world with astonishment and calamity. Nay, such is the sacredness which such characters sometimes carry along with them, that it has been known, in the very hour of convulsion, to stand between them and the undistinguishing steel of bigotry and treason. In the very countenances of these children you may read the tender impression which your humanity produces on their hearts. If they love and respect any thing under heaven, it is you, and even me, at this moment. That miserable and humiliating dependance to which the destiny of their birth had reduced them, is forgotten in the tumult of such feelings; every kind and

compassionate look we cast upon them, gives them that innocent but happy consequence in their own eyes, which is beyond all expression. This is the (indisputable) effect of such benefits as you confer on them, that the self-affection which nature inspires, becomes inseparably coupled with ardent affection for those to whose mercy they owe all the blessings they enjoy; and if on this, and every day of this nature, we present them with a bond of renewal, they offer us, they visibly offer us, in return, the glistening and heart-affecting discharge of that great obligation. Oh, my brethren, what it is to be merciful! no, not all that the world could lay in profusion at our feet, would ultimately and permanently bless us without the conscious possession of this god-like virtue.

Great was the design of God in this decree: he foresaw the infinite temptations which the world presents to the abuse of his gifts; but the wretched are his creatures; he, therefore, mercifully combines our felicity with their relief, and even crowns it here below with honour and glory.

Though I proposed, in this concluding part of my discourse, to seize every feature in the temporal condition of these children, that could speak with any power to your hearts, on reflection, would it not look like doubt; would it not appear that, in so doing, I was addressing you for the first, or nearly for the first time, in this cause? Or, that I deemed the solemn and sacred motives which I have already urged, insufficient to decide you? No, my brethren, I do more than depend on what has been said; I consider the fate of this institution, though not a word were uttered in support of it, to be happily determined. It is more in obedience to my nature and habits, that on these occasions I cast about for new ground, and am warm in addressing you, than from any sense of its necessity. When I plead with you for other objects, I descend from this place with trembling anxiety as to the issue, but for the cause I now plead, God, in his superior mercy has long, long attached this proved distinction—that it comes, it is seen, it conquers. Yes, my brethren, he has placed it on an eminence from which it never can fall, without grasp-

ing, in that event, all the pillars of religion and compassion, and mixing them in one common ruin for ever. While woman glories in unspotted virtue, or man generously recoils from the arts and trade of the villain who seduces and destroys, can it want ardent and plighted protectors? Oh, my brethren, how often have I painted in the colours which my imagination could supply, the destiny of such children when deserted! Such purity handed over to shameless vice! such forms to loathsomeness and disease! such infinite title to commiseration to nakedness, and famine, and all varieties of wretchedness! such finished candidates for a career of virtue and a blessed futurity, to curse the hour they were born through time and eternity! But I forget my resolution of leaving you to the influence of past impressions. These are the objects that produced, and will renew them. These are the creatures that have long led you to reflect on the horrors and disasters that exist around you; and have given you to know how far it is possible to approach Heaven in the feeling that prevents and deplores them. Those are the objects that have contributed

most to constitute this city.—What, my brethren? Why? The capital of Christian mercy throughout the Christian world. Yea, those little orphans—orphans did I say? even that title you will recollect; though familiar to every ear, though repeated in every breath, it is worthy of a pause; for to the heart that feels, it says infinite things. May God defend our children from the misfortune. The appeal is indeed here strong to the feelings of those who know what it is to love and adore their own. Let then this calamitous distinction in the children before you, have its weight in your recollections; as your own are dear to your hearts, the delight of your eyes, and the sources of your happiness; as the very thought of their becoming orphans at a tender age chills you with consternation, continue to be the parent of the parentless; for not one in that multitude, or the multitude that has passed through this institution, in the course of years, ever remembers to have been warmed in any bosom, or caressed by any hand but yours. This is truly an interesting consideration; and were it possible to consult the ashes of the

dead, perhaps we might learn that the foundation-stone of this charity was laid by the irresistible effect of the single word ORPHAN, but above all, FEMALE ORPHAN, on the most compassionate of hearts!

I will trouble you no more. That this appeal has been brought forward at an unpropitious period of the season I do deeply lament, and lament the more, my brethren, as the misfortune has chiefly arisen from the condition of my health; God knows how I have felt, and with what difficulty I have met you on this day. Should the event be fortunate, I shall be blessed; should it not, (which Heaven avert!) I shall be resigned to the first cloud that has ever obscured the brilliant face of this cause. In your hands and hearts is that event, but peculiarly with HIM who rules the feelings of every heart as he lists. If I behold around me less affluence than would have been at a more favourable time, I behold still the same fulness and elevation of mercy; and where that divine and mighty principle exists, it will hear me, it cannot but hear me, when I conjure it to

view, and feel for the only situation of peril in which this great and popular institution was ever placed. A double exertion from every individual in this place, at such a crisis, is what my long, long knowledge of you teaches me to look for. What to you will be little; what to you when done, will be more happiness than ever, to the cause more striking evidence of its merits and stability than ever, to God a more striking tribute of honor and glory than ever. Amen.

# SERMON XIII.

[For the Poor Children of the Parish of St. Nicholas Without, March 10, 1805.]

JOB, v., v. 7.

*Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward.*

I SHALL offer no apology, my brethren, for directing a short portion of your attention to a subject not immediately connected with that which has brought us together. It presents itself, alas! too imperiously to my mind; and I shall, therefore, I trust, find an excuse in your hearts, when I call you to recollect that man, in every situation of life, from the cottage to the throne, is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards; and that blessed are they who, under every visitation of heaven, have learned to bear with submission, and where to draw for consolation. Unhappily, my brethren, every day too much displays our activity in the pursuit of shadows, and

every day finishes by calling on the night to renew our powers for the same chace on the morrow.

It is easier to sound the depth of the ocean, than the immeasurable folly of human inclinations; the heart of man is a labyrinth, of whose embarrassed and uncertain ways, God alone can have a knowledge. Light, inconstant, eternally at variance with himself, he forms desires that are as suddenly destroyed by other desires: he loves every thing; he loves nothing: what pleased him yesterday, displeases him today: the object is the same, the affection is changed. Though the world should put him in possession of all its delights, and all its enjoyments, they would be insufficient to fix and satisfy, for he has one attachment nearly invincibly incompatible with rest and content, namely, an everlasting attachment to change and novelty.

The love of happiness is essential to his being. When the appearance presents itself, he flies to it with rapidity. The moment that commences, nearly puts a period

to his enjoyment. What does it serve us to possess, when we never cease to desire? Such is, too truly, the prevailing character of man, till the trouble arrives that brings wisdom on its gloomy wings, and tells him, too clearly, that he is to look for true and durable felicity only beyond the grave. It is thus, my brethren, that God, in his peculiar mercy, prevents us from burying our hearts and affections in the dust we trample on. It is thus he inspires a noble sentiment for our everlasting country. It is thus that he dissolves, often in a moment, the intoxication of fugitive possessions, in the soul of an immortal being, whom he has greatly destined to take possession even of HIMSELF.—How few would envy the most exalted condition of human prosperity, were they given, by such salutary means, to reflect on its obligations, its dangers, and its cares? What is it, in the eye of religion, but an awful distinction, which, by raising us above other men, obliges us to more eminence in virtue, and virtuous example; or, if accompanied by office and authority, but a strict subjection, which multiplies our duties, fills up

every moment of our lives, and renders us at best, but honourable victims of the public?

What are its riches, but a sacred deposit, which God has entrusted to our hand, to be touched with discretion and trembling, save for purposes of humanity alone? What are its pleasures, but, generally, either vices to be abhorred, or puerilities to be despised?

Woe to those whom God has not deemed worthy to be enlightened on those truths! Look to Solomon in all his glory; the immensity of his treasures; the magnificence of his palaces; his flourishing states; beloved of his subjects; respected by his neighbours; celebrated and admired through every region of the earth: then, turn from this dazzling picture of all human prosperity to contemplate Job, deprived, in a moment, of all his earthly possessions; the children he adored, torn, in a moment, from his embrace; cruelly abandoned by his relations; basely insulted by his friends; stretched upon a dunghill, naked and for-

lorn; his body covered with putrifying sores; in a word, reduced to a situation which no imagination can fix on without extraordinary horror!

Which of the two, my brethren, do you conceive to have been most favoured of God, the man whom excessive prosperity plunged at length into the very abyss of impurity; or he whose unparalleled adversity became at once the proof and triumph of his virtue? I need not say what the answer of a true Christian would be, or of any individual capable of distinguishing the true sublime of the human character!

It is not the gloomy visitation of a being averse to the repose of his creatures, much less of a jealous tyrant, who delights in their sufferings, but the merciful interference of a tender father to arrest the perdition of his children. This is the sole end proposed by every ill that afflicts the individual or desolates societies.

In all the various horrors and calamities

of war, we should behold alone the outstretched arm of God; in conquerors and heroes, the winged messengers of his vengeance; in plague, pestilence, and famine, the awful variety of his terrific lessons; in the whole train of wretchedness, private or social, to which man is heir, the operation of that infinite wisdom and mercy which would embitter one portion of our existence for the everlasting felicity of the other. But are there not, in the treasures of divine mercy, means of instruction to man, less severe but equally powerful? Less severe if you will, but rarely so powerful; God would lead us to what is right by the light of reason: this natural resource ought, in itself, to be sufficient to stem the force of human passions. I know nothing that ambition eagerly climbs for, or interest grasps at, or pleasure pursues, or the baser propensities of man are known to indulge in, that inspire not the pity and contempt of deliberate reason.

By the aid of this single principle, many heathens learned to despise what Christians

adore, and to place their happiness where Christians place it not, in the practice of virtue alone.

If the influence of religion, in regulating the conduct, be rare, that of philosophy is unknown. Every day presents the example of men of superior mental endowments, many whose talents and knowledge would fit them for the highest and most difficult purposes of society; many to whom scarce any thing in the volume of nature is a secret, either on the earth beneath, or in the heavens above; many who enlighten by their writings, or charm by their eloquence; every day, I say, the world beholds men of this favoured description, as weak in their pursuits as they are corrupt in their morals, running with the herd of fools the gaudy ring of all its follies; equally fascinated by pomp, by shew, by equipage, by costly decorations, costly entertainments, and all the splendid pageants of vanity, not unfrequently steeped to the very lips in its most degrading vices.

So little effect has even the highest degree

of reason, on the weakness and passions of man. Nor doth God, in the general, more effectually instruct us by other means. Too often, in vain, is the volume of his law, with all its promises and terrors, expanded before us. In vain do his ministers cry aloud on the dangers and abuse of a too fortunate condition. "I have called upon them in their abundance," says the Lord, "and they will not hear." In vain does he call on us to recollect him, in the sublime and ravishing spectacle of creation. In vain does he lay before us the example of others, victims of every degree and of every nature. In the midst of all inducements to reflection, all ground of alarm, lethargic and insensible in the calm and painted bosom of prosperity, it is the tempest alone that imperiously lifts our eyes to the great and insulted author of our benefits. Affliction is become almost our only school, and if it be necessary to tear up the bosom of the earth, in order to force it to produce fruits, so is it equally the human heart, to give it fertility in wisdom and virtue. All experience, and all Scripture prove, that there is not, under heaven,

a source of more incurable blindness and depravity, than prosperity unmixed with tribulation. The most enlightened amongst the heathens decided it to be a more difficult and glorious conquest in man over himself, to support such a state without degradation, than the worst ills with heroic fortitude; and for this plain reason, that the former, from the power which it affords of indulging the passions, as naturally relaxes the noble energies of the mind, as the latter calls them forth into superior and dignified action.

For one example where the benefits of God have not caused him to be forgotten, there are innumerable in Holy Writ, where his chastisements alone could bring him to the recollection of his ungrateful creatures. It was only while the Israelites groaned under the yoke of Babylon, that they thought of invoking "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." Nor do we find among the vast multitude that followed Jesus Christ in the course of his ministry, more than three, who, in the remotest degree, could be styled children of prosperity;

all the rest were, exclusively, those whom the pressure of various and excessive affliction forced to cry aloud, "Son of David, have mercy upon us."

So true is it that affliction, of whatever nature it may be, is the surest principle of our return to God; and that his temples are never more frequented than when his judgments lean heavy on the earth. If more evidence were necessary, we have it in the strong language of Jesus Christ and his Apostles, on the fatal consequences of prosperity, in which I see no ground of hope or consolation, but that exceptions are not declared impossible.

Every Christian concerned will naturally apply that ground of confidence to himself; and hence the source of a too general and dangerous tranquillity. I am not ignorant that many over-ingenious Christians have found out the secret of persuading themselves that all the denunciations in this case are merely held out to terrify. This is certainly a very happy and convenient discovery, should it not unfortunately be

refuted by the same experience as that of the rich man in the parable. On this principle we may fancy a security in the mercy of God to every enormity.

For me, I deem it better to recommend attention to the letter of the law, and firm conviction, that he, who, either in the possession or desire of wealth and prosperity, becomes exclusively enamoured of the present, has cause to be alarmed if he has faith, or if he have faith and be not alarmed, may set himself down as a victim.

But it may be said, that, if occasional trials are a check on the natural tendency of prosperity to corrupt, they often likewise add the guilt of murmur and revolt against God. True, my brethren, Pharoah remained hardened, under the most dreadful and extraordinary experience of divine visitation. But to this I answer, shew me the benefit of God which man does not abuse: why, therefore, not sometimes abuse his chastisements? If we sometimes behold wretches approaching even death in

all its terrors, with sounds of blasphemy on their lips, what does it prove, but that affliction is still an extraordinary mercy, since nothing but extreme iniquity can resist it.

If it does not invariably reclaim, may not another reason be, that every expedient is employed to prevent its salutary impression. What is the ordinary conduct of worldlings, when the career of their vices or their follies is embittered by some unexpected stroke, but instantly to throw obstacles in the way of reflection, by plunging deeper and deeper into all excesses? Flying with renewed rapidity from one scene of tumult and dissipation to another, often deluging their reason in brutal intoxication. Thus proving, as I before said, beyond the possibility of doubt, the effect of affliction, since it requires such study and stratagem to render it abortive.

Again what a blessing, where it does not reclaim, that it goes frequently to prevent the possibility of further offence? When

disease and infirmity condemn a woman to retreat, whose life has been passed in supporting the empire of dissipation, what, though the humiliating ravage on her person be not sufficient to detach her affections from a world that abandons her, it is enough that the idol is no longer on the altar, and the cause of virtue and religion benefitted by its misfortune. Or suppose a libertine, cut off, by a broken constitution and mouldering frame, from pursuits, that cover families with mourning, and society with hapless prostitutes; surely though such wretches should resist the intended mercy of God, and still glory and feed on the recollection of their brutal achievements; surely there is at least a ground to rejoice, that the early and just judgment of God becomes a source of happiness and salvation to multitudes of unprotected innocents. I have done with this view of the subject. You have seen, in the best light I could place it, the general and salutary effect of affliction. It shall be the object of one or two reflections more, to shew how a Christian ought to suffer.

Nothing is more common than to hear Christians reproaching those who would alarm them on the perils of their condition, with perfect ignorance of many severe trials to which even the highest state of prosperity, is exposed. You are deceived, my brethren; we are not ignorant what many are doomed to experience in this way.—We know that the world is a flattering tyrant, that conducts its votaries in pomp and decoration to the sacrifice. We know that every state, as every passion, has its peculiar victims.

One man, in the solitude of his study, will wither over the productions of his genius, and sacrifice an age of life and enjoyment, for an instant of reputation; another will passionately devote every faculty of his mind, and every hour of his life, to the allurement of dignities and honours; thus blindly sacrificing the substantial happiness within his power, in the pursuit of brilliant chimeras. Some become the miserable sport of a passion for glory: some the suffering and degraded victims of

a passion for money; at once the scorn of mankind, the horror of religion, and, by a just judgment, carrying within their breasts, the ever-waking principle of their torment.

Alas! my brethren, if religion has had its martyrs, perhaps the greatest of all martyrs are to be found within the circle of the world's reputed enjoyments; but, the truth, the aweful truth I would impress is this, that he who suffers for reputation or the things of this earth, has to look for his recompence where he has placed his heart; he may receive it, or he may not, that is, the ambitious may have his power and honour; the interested his gold; the soldier his laurels; the man of talents his name; but there is no crown for the affliction of the Christian, in whatever state it may be found, or from whatever passion it may arise, if it be not ultimately sanctified by religion.

Though his life should be exposed to a thousand perils, and even his body so mutilated as scarcely one half of the individual to survive the other, in the service of his

country, if his motives be not Christian, he will, with respect to his immortal prospects, have suffered in vain, for nothing but what is referred to God can return to God.

In the next place it is necessary we should endure our portion of ills with profound resignation. The calling of a Christian is the imitation of Christ; sublime as such a destination may be, St. Paul expressly lays it down as indispensable. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."

It is not given to man to suspend the career of nature; to appease the ocean and the storm, or give animation to the grave. Jesus Christ did not save by the glorious demonstration of his power, but by his sufferings and humiliations.

What was therefore the great example of the divine justice, we are required to make the close and eager object of our imitations. It is not meant however, that to become a disciple of Jesus Christ we are to run in search of afflictions, which providence may

not have designed us; since in defect of these, a true spirit of evangelical detachment is sufficient to establish our conformity to that divine model; but, I say, for the consolation of the afflicted Christian, that his conformity with that model is most perfect; for Jesus Christ became not in theory, but in practice the man of sorrow, and emptied the cup which his father presented him, to the lees, for the salvation of mankind.

Wherever therefore I see affliction supported with heavenly patience, I see the blessed reproduction of our divine master's example. Nor do I hesitate to say, that, after God, there is nothing so sacred on earth, as a just man rising superior to affliction. Though Job, in the season of his prosperity, was celebrated through his nation for justice and probity; though he was eminently, as we read, the father of the orphan and the indigent, it was not this that so much proved the greatness of his character, as the divinity of his patience in that horrible extremity where deception was impossible. It is not when the ocean is

calm and the heavens serene, that we pronounce on the ability of the pilot.

Behold the majestic oak, whose towering and pompous head is tormented by the storm; though the earth be strewed around with the wreck of its branches, the mighty trunk remains firm and unshaken amidst the fury of the elements. Such is the grand and immoveable position of the Christian amidst the blasts of tribulation. Some degree of fortitude has in such cases been inspired by philosophy; but more than fortitude, more than submission—Yes, peace and joy can belong only to the disciple of Jesus Christ.

This it was that confounded the Cæsars; abashed their bloody instruments, and gave to Christianity the empire of the world. Paul astonishing the proudest sages of Athens and of Rome by his sublime and sacred eloquence; Paul adored at Ephesus as a god; Paul healing the diseased, and enlightening nations, did not think himself as worthy of his divine Master by all his labours and prodigies, as by the chains he

wore; and yet, my brethren, how few of us receive affliction as we ought! What sallies of impatience when it is any thing like extreme! What efforts to extract the salutary dart from our bosoms! Where is the Christian sublime enough even to invoke it as the only real test of virtue, which too nearly resembles those precious plants that require to be pressed and bruised, in order to extract their perfume! Alas, my brethren, we do not even generously and gratefully recollect how peculiarly Heaven has favoured us under the ills we know; that we possess various resources denied to thousands of our fellow-creatures; that in many extremities our abundance supplies multiplied aids and attentions; that in all, and perhaps the severest of all, when the tomb has devoured the person dearest to our hearts, our tears have a wider refuge in the sympathy of friends. In a word, that if we placed in a balance, on the one hand our afflictions, and on the other our consolations, we should find yet more to nurse our corruption, than to promote our salvation.

Great God! did we rightly consider the condition of those beings, who are born to the extreme of all calamity, who, in the bed of disease, or amidst the horrors of intolerable poverty, scarce know one gleam of comfort; to whom the slenderest relief, or casual accent of pity is sudden happiness and joy! It is then we should learn what to think of our own afflictions, which borrow their bitterness only from habits of too much felicity; it is then that our want of submission would be changed into ardent thanksgiving; and that, less occupied by the few trials that fall to our lot, than by the affecting conviction of those we have been spared, we should rather tremble at the indulgence of Heaven, than complain of its severity.

Methinks I cannot select a more proper moment for bringing the cause of those children to your recollection.

Though I have presumed to employ the time usually devoted on those occasions, either to general reflections on the virtue of

charity, or the benefit of religious education, I trust in God, that this, my first deviation from common practice, will not prove injurious. Perhaps, when you reflect that it has saved me the necessity of torturing a most barren topick, and you the pain of hearing it tortured, I may the more readily be excused.

If these children possess, in common with all of their class, a clear title to your protection, they likewise possess, as most of you I believe know, another nearly peculiar to themselves. On this distinction I have likewise often dwelt, and found in the result, of those repeated appeals in their behalf, that extraordinary cases have invariably produced extraordinary mercy. Were it the fortune of this institution, not to interest, as it has done, the upper and middle ranks of the public at large, it would not live an hour. This, every individual acquainted with the resources of the parish in which it stands, must know to be a truth.

I have often thought, that it would be a most beneficial and charitable improve-

ment on the present system, were all the Protestant establishments in this city, for the education of poor infants, consolidated into a few, on an extensive scale, into which admission should be given without distinction of parishes. By this means, protection would be extended, in the proportion it ought, to those impoverished quarters where destitute infants swarm, and are necessitous to a degree that excites equal astonishment and horror; and, what I conceive to be a much greater evil, live in the very focus of all contagion, all impurity, immoral and treasonable. For no man can be ignorant, or can deny, that all the experience we have in this metropolis, of violated laws and violated peace, has issued from those too-much-neglected and proscribed hives of every desperate, furious, and sanguinary passion.

Thus, indeed, would the end of education be happily answered, and that duty and attachment to particular establishments, which a residence in this or that parish creates, be changed into interest for the general object.

I would submit it to the impartial reason of any individual, whether the parish, whose advocate I now am, which has contained for many years past a population of twenty thousand souls, (though now diminished) as to male adults, from a cause which I shall hereafter mention, and those generally of a cast the most abject and miserable, ought, in the eye of policy, religion, or humanity, to be confined to an institution of twenty children?

Yet so it is; and I bless the great God of mercy, and sovereign protector of society, that I have found in the humanity of the public at large, means of accomplishing so much; but, striking as the necessity of my case is, what increase must it not have received from the multitude of wretches under charges too notoriously founded, whom the peculiar mercy of Government has suffered to pass into the service of the army or navy; and still more, who, though no way implicated, have voluntarily embraced the same resource, and equally left their families to their fate, from positive inability to procure them any thing like support, under the

excessive price of every thing necessary to keep body and soul together. The consequence of this is as clear as it is shocking to every feeling of humanity: I will not attempt to describe it; my brethren. Whatever the colour of the extremity may be, when families are stripped of their only stay, I know enough of your hearts to say, that "you too are painters." For me it is sufficient to state facts; sufficient to shew that, on a case which you always knew and admitted to be palpably extreme, God has stamped new and inscrutable demonstration.

For you it is to conceive, if the number of most wretched infants, who before looked up to the chance of being admitted into the bosom of this little institution, wrung the bosom of the beholder, what it must be now, under the additional load of distress that has come upon their district. I do solemnly declare, that, when I am called upon to fill a vacancy among the few you behold, I deem it almost as much cruelty as mercy to make an election; when I look to the flow of tears, the depth of sorrow, the disap-

pointed aspect of that wretchedness which hard necessity obliges me to reject; if I rejoice one poor creature, and the palpitating heart of the mother who bore it, I deliver innumerable others to increased misery and despair.

You will judge, therefore, whether or not I implore you on substantial grounds, to continue, at least the past measure of your favours to this institution. Should God inspire you, from what you have heard, to do more, you shall see, you shall enjoy the effect of it on our next appearance before you. It has been the fortune of my life to lead you, step by step, to great things in behalf of many similar institutions; why should I not, under God, look for the same fortune in a case like this? Unless it be true, that divine religion and divine humanity lose their influence in proportion to the magnitude and sublimity of the call upon them!

I am not cool enough, on these occasions, to weigh the chance of distant casualty: that is, to bestow a thought on the possibility of your receding at a future day. My duty

and my feelings impel me to employ every nerve of my strength, not only in the relief of the objects before me, but of the living and unparalleled misery in the eye of my mind.

Futurity will provide for itself. The orphan will have the same God! What, though I have recently seen the school of the parish in which I stand, failing to draw sufficiency for its support; have I not likewise seen that no sooner has this apparent misfortune been generally made known, than relief began to flow in its wonted profusion!

"Men of little faith," learn more confidence in Him who has said, "that mothers should abandon their babes, but the work he has raised shall never be abandoned." I adjure you, therefore, without dread of future consequence, to meet the necessity I laid before you as it ought to be met. Let such an example prove that decided attention to the general objects shall at length become predominant, and generations yet unborn will bless the reign of such a sentiment.

I know that a congregation variously composed, must be various in its efforts; but one additional shilling from those who have little, will mark the influence of reason, and justice, and true mercy, in this case, as powerfully as twenty additional guineas from the opulent and great. Were I inclined to add to an infinitude of motives, I might still say, what must deeply interest every true lover of his country and the empire, that there is scarcely one of those children, and few in the multitude for whom I still more warmly plead, who are not born of fathers, who either actually serve, or have perished in the service of their country.

I remember, during our civil contest for every thing dear and sacred to the heart of civilized and religious man, that the representation of this single claim would produce on the spot a contribution of twelve hundred pounds.

Is our present contest less sublime and aweful? Would the soil we tread have less horrors to apprehend in the event of a triumphant invader? Great God, what havoc does ambition make among thy

works? I see it sitting at this moment, in ghastly triumph, on a throne still wet with the blood of its rightful possessor! I see it dragging hoary and trembling religion from a distant region, and forcing it to the guilt and baseness of consecrating this foul usurpation! I see, of surrounding nations, some chained to its footstool, and ground to the very dust in its pillage and rapacity; some compelled to wield their energies in support of its crimes; some still permitted to breathe by its insulting forbearance; and in the midst of all this I, hear it mocking the understanding and feeling of mankind, by the specious accents of peace and philanthropy.

Excuse these reflections, my brethren, they are only offered to shew what God has destined us to resist, and that if ever there was cause for glorious pride in the human soul, every member of this empire, even the most abject, should feel it when he looks at the stand it makes at this solemn day. The unshaken, the solitary bulwark of religion, of freedom, of property, of life, against the scourge, the Attila of the world!

ASIATIC SOCIETY

Let this exalted consideration swell your munificence on this occasion, as it should swell your hearts, if you are sensible of the overflowing and singular wretchedness that looks up to you this day; remember likewise, that it bears a distinction that cannot be contemplated by the patriot, by the Christian, without a feeling of extraordinary interest and affection. Remember not the character or offences of their fathers; for one drop of blood, shed in such a cause, might almost atone before God and man for years of iniquity.

What have I left unsaid that could be said in such a cause. Nothing, can I collect from the general countenance around me that my hopes shall not be disappointed. Yes, my brethren, I am full of confidence, even from this pulpit I can see that the only enemy it has, namely, the whisper of the world and its little interest, the God of mercy has enabled me to vanquish. My whole soul I confess is engaged in the success of this particular appeal to you. What could have inspired me with more earnestness than I have ever before shewn, but an uncommon cause? Would it be

new to me to succeed in the cause of unprotected innocence? Oh no, my brethren. Nothing I repeat, nothing but a case, in all its views, the most interesting and calamitous, could have given a spring to my feelings, and redoubled ardour and perseverance to my entreaties.

May the God of society, and the father of the fatherless, be in every heart here present, the giver on this day, and it will be a day registered in letters of everlasting light, in that blessed region to which we all aspire, and to which we shall thus arrive through the infinite mercies of JESUS CHRIST, OUR SAVIOUR AND REDEEMER.

And now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE END.

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